Commentary
February 2003

Does Israel Need a Plan?
Daniel Pipes

The Catholic Crisis
Daniel Johnson

Lahore; or, the Islamic Gale
David Warren

Goodbye, Mr. Chipstein
Joseph Epstein

The Contract—A Story
John J. Clayton

Beethoven's Message
Terry Teachout

Exchanges: *Jihad / Russia's Progress / God in History / Jefferson*

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February 2003

Letters from Readers

Jihad

To the Editor:

Daniel Pipes includes us in a group of university professors who "deny that jihad has any military meaning whatsoever" ["Jihad and the Professors," November 2002]. Though we have generally respected Mr. Pipes as a scholar, he has both of us absolutely and totally wrong on this matter. For the past year and more, we have made exactly the opposite point about jihad in lectures to various audiences (including ones at the U.S. Naval Academy and the University of Notre Dame). In the June/July 2002 issue of *First Things*, James Turner Johnson explained his understanding of the idea of "jihad of the sword" in Islamic tradition as well as Osama bin Laden's explicit use of that tradition in a 1998 *fatwa*. Similar pieces by John Kelsay appeared recently in *America* and the *Christian Century*.

It is certainly true that in the Qur'an the word jihad applies to the inner struggle for submission to God, but it is a great and unwarranted leap to conclude that granting this amounts to a denial of its military meaning. Indeed, the use of this word to apply to warfare traces back to the prophet Muhammad and the original Muslim community, and a well developed position on jihad of the sword is a firm element in Islamic law beginning in the late 8th century. A distorted, though undoubtedly seriously religious, version of this idea is one of the cornerstones of contemporary jihadism.

John Kelsay
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

James Turner Johnson
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

To the Editor:

Although I have long admired and profited from the scholarly insights of Daniel Pipes, he does John Kelsay a grave injustice when he writes in "Jihad and the Professors" that Kelsay concurs with those who "deny that jihad has any military meaning whatsoever."

Kelsay is a careful and responsible scholar whose views do not warrant Mr. Pipes's charge. In his book *Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics* (1993), for example, Kelsay notes the Sunni division of the world into *dar al-Islam*, the territory where Islamic norms have official recognition, and *dar al-harb*, the territory where "ignorance of God" is said to prevail. Kelsay accurately describes the Islamic view that

> the territory of Islam . . . could not be a secure place until and unless Islamic hegemony was acknowledged everywhere. To secure such hegemony was the goal of the jihad, or "struggle in the path of God." According to the Sunni theorists, war or jihad by means of killing is justified when a people resists or otherwise stands in opposition to the legitimate goals of Islam.

In more recent articles, he has explicitly described both the aggressively military component of jihad and some of the more important Islamic rationales defending it.

Daniel Pipes has made a superb contribution to our understanding of the confrontation of Islam with the modern world. It would be a pity if the value of his work were diminished by inaccurate characterizations—no matter how unintentional—of the contributions of other scholars.

Richard L. Rubenstein
University of Bridgeport
Fairfield, Connecticut

To the Editor:

Daniel Pipes expresses great concern about the falsification of facts by American scholars who should know better. Yet he makes

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two claims about me, both of them false. First, he claims I am the author of a book called *The Road to Kandahar: A Genealogy of Jihad in Modern Islamist Political Thought*. Though I have delivered a public lecture by that name, I have published no article or book by that title; the book I did write is called *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism* (1999).

Further, Mr. Pipes attributes to me the position that there is no military component to jihad. This is not a position I hold, nor is it one for which I have ever argued. In the lecture from which Mr. Pipes quotes (but which he did not attend), I clearly stated that Muslims in the past and the present have interpreted jihad to entail a range of actions and imperatives, both military and nonmilitary. To quote from my own lecture, I argued that the legal doctrine of jihad defines it as "legitimate force in defense and expansion of Islam," and that Islamists such as Sayyid Qutb have drawn upon this doctrine to reject the argument that jihad is primarily spiritual or defensive. Qutb argued that jihad is necessary to "rid the world of *jahiliyya* [ignorance] and establish divine sovereignty." His targets included what he saw as the "newest *dar al-harb*—the West" and any Muslims who disagreed with his view of what Islam or jihad really is. In the book that I *did* write, I make this argument in more detail.

ROXANNE L. EUBEN
Wellesley College
Wellesley, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Jihad is clearly endorsed in the Qur'an in cases of oppression and injustice, and it is naïve of academic apologists for Islam to focus just on its aspect of inner struggle. But Daniel Pipes's assertion that jihad is intended to force Islam on non-Muslims is disproved by the verse in the Qur'an that says, "there is no compulsion in religion." Even in cases where armed struggle is allowed, there are strict Islamic guidelines: there must be no treaty with the other nation, it must be given fair warning to desist from its behavior, and the fighting must stop when the oppression has ceased. Under no circumstances can jihad take on an offensive posture or—as Mr. Pipes thinks—act as a tool of Muslim dominion.

There are definitely historical instances in which Muslims waged war on non-Muslims without just cause. But most educated Muslims believe that God was not on the side of the Muslims who committed these excesses because they had left the bounds of Islamic law. The wars associated with Islamic victory and expansion were largely defensive ones in which Muslims fought non-Muslims who had oppressed Muslim minorities.

ERFAN IBRAHIM
San Ramon, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Daniel Pipes is known for his diatribes against Islam and Muslims. Reading his article on "Jihad and the Professors," I thought, "Here he goes again!"

Mr. Pipes asserts that professors and peace-loving Muslims are wrong when they say that jihad means "to resist temptations and become a better person," and that Osama bin Laden's definition of the term as "the legal, compulsory, communal effort to expand the territories ruled by Muslims . . . at the expense of territories ruled by non-Muslims" is the only correct one. To support this claim, he cites Muslim struggles in Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Chechnya, and Kashmir (though he somehow leaves out Palestine). Yet, in Chechnya, Kashmir, and Palestine, it is Muslims who are the *victims* of territorial expansion, and the struggles in Algeria and Egypt are *within* the Muslim community.

Mr. Pipes is also wrong when he claims that Muhammad engaged in 78 battles, only one of them defensive. In point of fact, he fought three battles (in which the total number of casualties did not exceed 136), and all were defensive. Muhammad regarded human life as sacred and avoided violence at all costs. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the West today, and this is certainly not because of jihad or coercion.

SHAFI REFAI
President
United Muslims of America
Fremont, California

TO THE EDITOR:

The fatal flaw in Daniel Pipes's argument is that he ignores the material on jihad and war in the Qur'an itself. In fact, when the term jihad appears in the Qur'an, it always indicates the inner struggle to be a good Muslim. Never does it indicate armed or military action.

Mr. Pipes also makes the error of thinking that every war in which Muslims take part must be labeled jihad. This is not so. The Qur'an's rules of war are clear, and many of them would resonate with Augustine's "just war" teachings.

To be sure, jihad *can* become violent and militaristic. The Qur'an holds that the "blood of my enemy is lawful to me" when the enemy prevents a Muslim from achieving any of the five pillars of Islam. In recent history, who has tried to prevent Muslims from performing their duties? The Shah in Iran, the Soviets in Afghanistan, and Israel, which until recently forbade Palestinians to make the *hajj*. As a matter of policy and practice, the U.S. has never kept Muslims from practicing their faith. Therefore, those who claim jihad against America misuse a sacred term to legitimize terrorism.

Militant groups who feel that the term jihad justifies their intolerance for Western culture have used the term incorrectly for the past 25 years or so. It is this recent usage, rather than the previous 1,400 years of tradition, that Mr. Pipes incorrectly considers normative.

THOMAS S. FERGUSON
Manhattan College
Riverdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Daniel Pipes draws little distinction between Islamists who offer a pacific interpretation of jihad in order to misrepresent their own purposes and moderate Muslims who do the same as part of a process of adjusting Islam to the contemporary world and to America's civic religion. Yet America's success at achieving comity among diverse religious groups comes partly from fudging distinctions and finessing religious doctrines. Americans go into their places of worship and avow a variety of things, the more divisive (or inconvenient) of which they have al-

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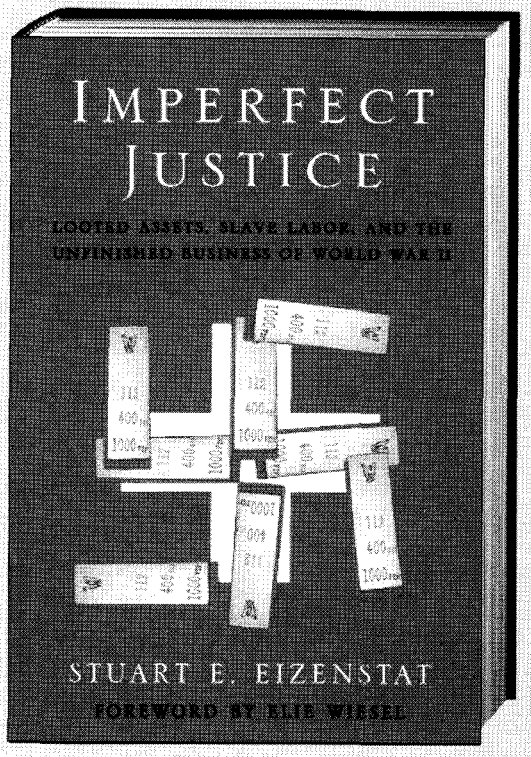
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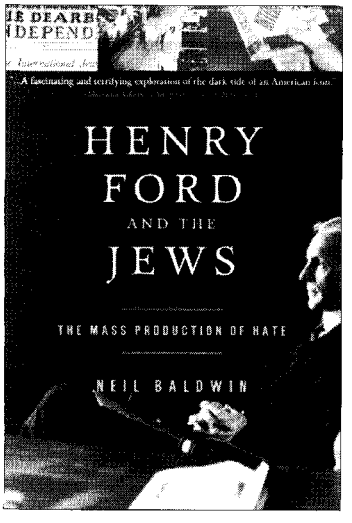

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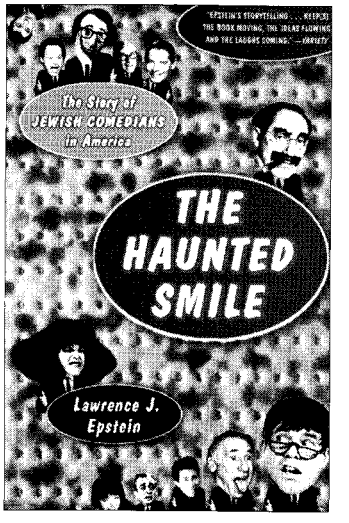

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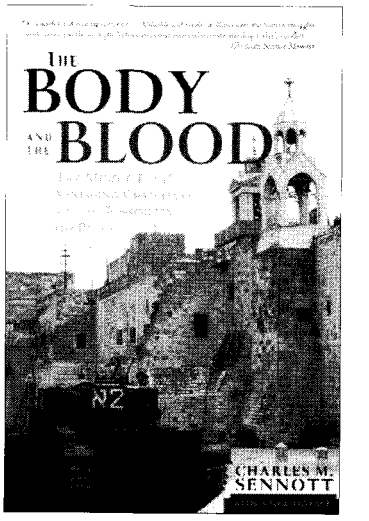

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lowed to lapse into disuse. To cite a couple of biblical examples that come to mind, "No man comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6) has implications that we no longer consider it appropriate to take seriously, as does "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus 22:17).

Many of our religions and sects have bloody histories and some evil doctrines. At a time when many American Muslims want to distance themselves as much as possible from militant Islam, do we really want to hold their feet to the fire with respect to historical accuracy and conceptual clarity? Some of the statements Mr. Pipes cites sound to me like characteristic American pieties: tedious, but fundamentally wholesome attempts toward civilized exegesis.

VIRGIL E. VICKERS
Newton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for printing Daniel Pipes's brutally honest and deeply troubling piece. It is very difficult for people nourished from infancy on the principles of human rights, individual liberties, and the love of peace to fathom the jihadist program. Mr. Pipes is right to force us to look this brute in the eye and recognize its true nature. If anything, more attention should be paid to the role played by our own Western traditions of balance (in the press), nuance (in diplomacy), and skepticism (in academe) in keeping us from dealing with a movement that views the world in the stark terms of black and white, good versus evil.

DIANE KRIEGER
Torrance, California

TO THE EDITOR:

The propagandistic statements about jihad that are dominant in our universities are abetted by our own political leadership, which has declared that we are at war against "terrorism," a war, however, in which one finds no enemies but Islamists. President Bush has repeatedly referred to Islam as a peaceful religion from which Osama bin Laden and his ilk are merely deviants.

I do not know if this fantasizing is the result of ignorance, political correctness, or the growth here of a Muslim community. Should this pattern of declaring Islam a peaceful religion akin to Christianity and Judaism continue, we may find ourselves trapped in the same predicament with our Muslim community as the Western Europeans are with theirs. We are now at war against Islam, and by sweeping this truth under the rug, we invite our own demise.

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

In support of Daniel Pipes's thesis, I offer a quotation from *Conditions of Liberty* (1994) by the late Ernest Gellner, who taught at the London School of Economics and wrote extensively on Muslim societies. As he observed, well before the slaughter of September 11,

> Muslim law formally obliges Muslim rulers to wage the Holy War for the extension of the faith every ten years at the very least—ten years being the maximum time allowed for truce with the infidel—if conditions are propitious and victory reasonably likely. Who knows when, given the unforeseeable potentials of modern technology, that crucial final condition may not seem to be fulfilled? Some of them quietly ignore this obligation and will continue to do so. Some might not.

BERNARD RUDICH
Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Daniel Pipes is to be commended. I had innocently thought that the universities were dedicated to truth, but I can no longer ignore the overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

RICHARD K. MASON
Altadena, California

DANIEL PIPES writes:

John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson assert (and Richard L. Rubenstein seconds them) that their scholarly work recognizes the military nature of jihad. I am delighted to learn this. But the survey in "Jihad and the Professors" was explicitly limited to what professors say to a general audience. "To see what the public is told," I stated in my footnote on page 18, "I looked at op-ed pieces, quotations in newspaper articles, and interviews on television rather than at articles in learned journals." What I found there suggested that both of these gentlemen deny jihad's military component.

Here, for instance, is a transcript from Cleveland's NewsChannel 5, dated September 14, 2001:

> Kelsay has devoted his life to studying Islam and is teaching this semester at John Carroll University. He said that people misunderstand and misinterpret Islamic terms like jihad. Kelsay said that jihad means to struggle, and for the Muslim the greatest struggle or jihad is to lead a life obeying God's law, rules which absolutely forbid attacks on innocent people like the one Tuesday [September 11]. "From the standpoint of Islamic law, this is forbidden. This is not a part of the Islamic reasoning about the laws of war," said Kelsay.

Similarly, when I looked up the Rutgers University school paper, the *Daily Targum*, I found the following for October 5, 2001:

> James Johnson, a professor of religion, explained that the term "holy war" is, intrinsically, neither Christian nor Islamic. "Jihad," to Islam, means "striving in the path of God," he offered, while "holy war" did not appear until after the Protestant Reformation.

Roxanne L. Euben is of course correct that she did not write a book with the title I ascribed to her. I mistakenly relied on the *Daily Northwestern* of January 21, 2002. ("In a lecture attended by approximately 25 Northwestern students and faculty Friday at Scott Hall, Euben spoke about her recent book titled *The Road to Kandahar: A Genealogy of Jihad in Modern Islamist Political Thought*.") I apologize to Professor Euben for repeating what turns out to be an error. As for her assertion that she acknowledges a military component to jihad, again I am glad to hear it—and again I point out that my analysis was restricted to newspaper and television reports. The *Daily Northwestern* covered her talk as follows:

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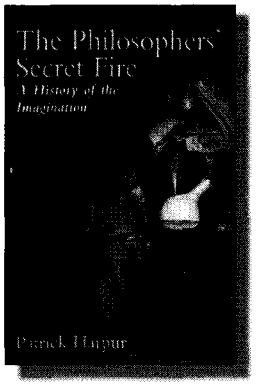

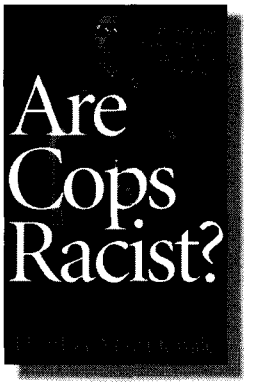

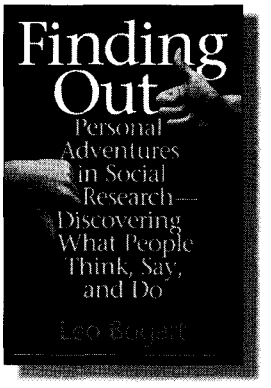

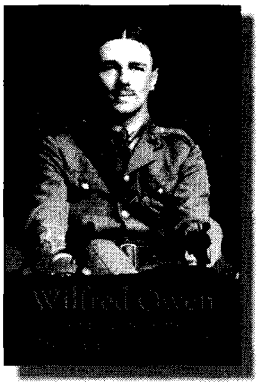

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The portrayal of jihad as an archaic crusade characterized by violence has contributed, Euben said, to a misunderstanding of Islam. "For many Muslims, jihad means to resist temptation and become a better person," Euben said. "Islam is no more inherently violent [than] Christianity is inherently peaceful. . . . Euben said jihad is derived from the Arabic word struggle and means to struggle in the path of God. Euben said this struggle primarily refers to an internal conflict between good and evil forces of the soul.

Strictly speaking, then, my characterizations of public statements by Professors Kelsay, Johnson, and Euben were correct. But I happily accept their point that their scholarly writings show them not to be in the business of whitewashing jihad; it is good to know there are some honest voices in the academy. Unfortunately, though, moving them out of the column of apologists only slightly mitigates my argument; unless I am wrong in other cases as well—and so far there is no evidence of that—we are still left with the other nine-tenths of the professors I surveyed pretending that jihad is not what it is.

Erfan Ibrahim mistakenly attributes to me the view that "jihad is intended to force Islam on non-Muslims." As I made perfectly clear in "Jihad and the Professors," my definition of the term has nothing to do with religious conversion and everything to do with control of land. Jihad, I wrote there, is "the legal, compulsory, communal effort to expand the territories ruled by Muslims (known in Arabic as *dar al-Islam*) at the expense of territories ruled by non-Muslims (*dar al-harb*)." Mr. Ibrahim's second assertion, that "under no circumstances can jihad take on an offensive posture or . . . act as a tool of Muslim dominion," is an example of the apologetics that my article exposes. It ignores centuries of rulings about jihad, not to mention the military campaigns that established Muslim dominion from Marrakesh to Bangladesh.

Shafi Refai gets off to a bad start when he asserts I am "known for diatribes against Islam and Muslims"; would he like it if I reciprocated by alluding to his being "known" to harbor a militant Islamic agenda? Instead, let us stick to what each of us actually says and writes.

Mr. Refai makes two points. His statement about the origins of what he delicately calls "Muslim struggles" in Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Chechnya, and Kashmir is tangential to my thesis, which was that jihad has served as the primary motivation to violence in all these places. As for his statement that Muhammad engaged in three rather than (as I said) 78 battles, that is a difference of semantics; the source for my statistic obviously defines "battle" rather more broadly than does Mr. Refai.

Thomas S. Ferguson betrays a naive belief that the Qur'an alone counts in Islamic law and life. This is roughly analogous to asserting that the Constitution is the only law in the United States. Both the Qur'an and the Constitution are the foundations of complex legal systems; to ignore these systems is to ignore the actual worlds in which Muslims and Americans live. Nonspecialists tend to overemphasize the Qur'an, which is far easier to grasp than the vast and often contradictory corpus called the *shari'a* that grew up to explain it. But it is the latter that represents the Muslim understanding of the law, including the law of jihad.

Virgil E. Vickers berates me for not allowing moderate Muslims to reinterpret jihad "as part of a process of adjusting Islam to the contemporary world." He raises an important point, and one that I hope to return to in the future. Here, let me briefly respond that of course I eagerly wish to see jihad evolve into nothing more offensive than moral self-improvement. But such a development can take place only in the context of a frank recognition of what jihad has meant through the centuries. To deny this history, as Muslims and their academic apologists so often do, actually *undercuts* efforts at reinterpretation. Here is an analogy: West Germany acknowledged the horrors of its citizens' actions during World War II, and thereby rehabilitated itself, whereas eastern Germany, Austria, and Japan are still paying the price for their refusal to come to grips with that period of their history.

I thank Diane Krieger, Frederic Wile, Bernard Rudich, and Richard K. Mason for their support and encouragement.

Russia Today

TO THE EDITOR:

Leon Aron's simple but critical insight is that Russia's collapse amounted to a revolution, the replacement of old institutions by a new social and political order ["Russia's Revolution," November 2002]. Although the end of Communism was met with little celebration in Russia—many citizens feared chaos, bloodshed, and destitution—the result, as Mr. Aron so eloquently illustrates, has been much more favorable than most anticipated.

Today the Russian economy has been privatized, and owners restructure their companies and stand up for their property rights, thereby reinvigorating the legal system. A market economy is firmly in place, and Russian society has never been more open. Indeed, Russia is enjoying the benefits of post-revolutionary stabilization, with a high rate of economic growth and a swiftly rising standard of living.

The worry is not the private sector, but a state that remains far too large and powerful. The Russian government now accounts for nearly 40 percent of the country's GDP, up from a third just a few years ago. The dominant economic and social concern is corruption in the powerful state bureaucracy and its poor performance in providing health care and education.

Vladimir Putin's main shortcoming is that he appears as complacent as Boris Yeltsin was about the corruption that threatens to discredit Russian democracy. The critical issue for the country's future is whether its new middle class will stand up and face these challenges.

ANDERS ÅSLUND
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Washington, D.C.

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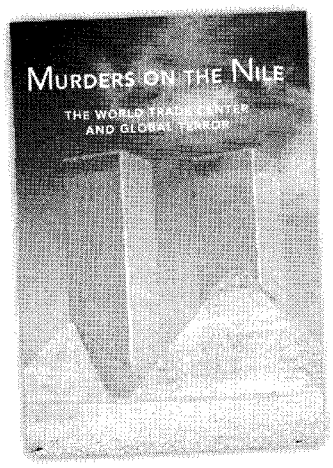
MURDERS ON THE NILE

THE WORLD TRADE CENTER AND GLOBAL TERROR

By J. Bowyer Bell



In *Murders on the Nile, the World Trade Center and Global Terror*, J. Bowyer Bell takes us back to the cradle of Islamic discontent, showing how terror arose along the banks of the Nile a century ago amidst the grievances of an Egypt held in bondage by foreign imperialists and local despots. The most zealous of these lethal idealists found in righteous murder a proper means to shape their vision of an ideal Islamic society free from the contaminating influence of Westernization. Bell shows how this homicidal heritage developed and was first brought to America by Sheikh Abdel Rahman, the blind cleric who masterminded the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993. In describing this genealogy of terror, Bell shows how what began as murders on the Nile, ultimately became murders on the Hudson as well.

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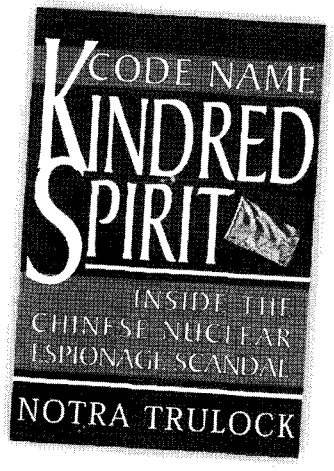
CODE NAME KINDRED SPIRIT

Inside The Chinese Nuclear Espionage Scandal

By Notra Trulock



"Every journalist knows that there are two sides to every story—sometimes many more than two. *Code Name KINDRED SPIRIT* tells us the other side of the Wen Ho Lee saga, an insider's account by the ultimate insider—the experienced officer who was in charge of intelligence for the Energy Department. Trulock tells it the way he saw it ... with no middle ground, no temporizing and no rationalizing. His is a voice rarely heard in today's Washington."

—Seymour Hersh, author of, *The Dark Side of Camelot*

"Wen Ho Lee's defensive memoir grabbed plenty of headlines, but Trulock's account has a disturbing ring of truth."

—*Publishers Weekly*

Notra Trulock was Director of Intelligence at the U.S. Department of Energy throughout the 1990s. In *Code Name KINDRED SPIRIT*, he takes us inside the U.S. nuclear labs and describes their culture and security problems. He tells how he came to suspect that Chinese spies were operating inside these labs and how the trail he followed led to Wen Ho Lee. Trulock tried to warn the President and Congress. When he was ignored, he blew the whistle, creating a domestic crisis for the Clinton administration and forcing it finally to address the security breaches in our nation's nuclear weapons complex.

Code Name KINDRED SPIRIT is a spellbinding book that takes us directly into the murky world of nuclear espionage. But it is also a daunting story about the fate of the messenger who brought the bad news. After the scandal broke, Trulock was smeared as a bigot and a mentally unstable alarmist. When he attempted to tell his side of the story, the FBI tried to silence him. He was demoted and driven out of government, his career and his personal reputation ruined.

Code Name KINDRED SPIRIT reads like a Carre novel written by Kafka.

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TO THE EDITOR:

Leon Aron's very informative analysis of Putin's Russia lays out a reasonable basis for future progress there. But all the evidence Mr. Aron puts forth is somewhat clouded by the one reality Putin cannot sweep aside—the pervasiveness of the Russian mafia. Russia's future economic growth and the evolution of free institutions there may depend more on domestic anti-crime measures than on anti-terrorism operations in Chechnya. The moral bond so necessary in a free society is seriously damaged by the criminal element Mr. Aron neglects to mention.

CORNELIUS J. TROOST
Tampa, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

Although I agree with many of Leon Aron's comments in "Russia's Revolution," he fails to explain why the vast majority of Russians feel nostalgia for the days of the Soviet Union.

RALPH SLOVENKO
Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR:

Congratulations to Leon Aron for brilliantly illuminating the magnitude and extraordinary achievements of "Russia's Revolution." At a time when public debate on this subject so easily loses sight of the forest for the trees, Mr. Aron's erudite analysis is refreshing and bold.

Not only has Russia been carrying out an economic, social, and political revolution, but, for nearly a decade and a half, it has undertaken a geopolitical retreat from empire. Russia reached the apex of its power in the late 1970's, with the failed Soviet war in Afghanistan marking the beginning of a process that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and, in the 1990's, the eastward expansion of NATO.

This is not to say that the Russians have withdrawn happily from their empire; it has been politically controversial and difficult for the national psyche. Yet ever since Gorbachev made the historic choice to trade strategic retreat for greater integration with the West and the global economy, Russian foreign policy has demonstrated far more continuity than change.

That is why the debate for the last year or so about whether Putin's post-9/11 pro-West foreign policy represents a "tactical" or a "strategic" shift is misplaced. Those who suggest that Putin's foreign policy is merely a tactical ploy, allowing Russia time to recover economically so that it can once again confront the West, fail to appreciate the powerful constraints on the country's behavior. Russia's economy is less than 5 percent the size of that of the United States. Even in a best-case scenario, with the Russian economy growing at an annual rate of 7 percent for the next two decades while the U.S. economy stagnates, Russian GDP would amount to only about 15 percent of American GDP.

To approach such levels of growth, Russia will need to be far more deeply engaged with the world economy, especially through Western trade and investment. Unless Russia wants to doom itself to backwardness and vulnerability, the strategic choices it made in the late 1980's should persist well into the new century.

ANDREW KUCHINS
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

"Russia's Revolution" is the clearest and most convincing account of post-Communist Russia I have read, and it confirms the author's reputation as our most astute observer and analyst of that country.

MICHAEL MANDELBAUM
School of Advanced International Studies
Johns Hopkins University
Washington, D.C.

LEON ARON writes:

Cornelius J. Troost quite rightly draws attention to one of the largest black marks against today's Russia. Crime—together with corruption, as Anders Åslund points out in his characteristically illuminating note—is a huge problem. Yet, as always in the case of post-Communist Russia, the first two questions are: is this phenomenon uniquely Russian, and is it lethal to political and economic progress?

The answer to the first question is definitely "no." All post-authoritarian societies experience an explosion of deviance and criminality, whether organized or "individual"—from Spain and Portugal in the 1970's to post-apartheid South Africa today, where the incidence of rape and murder is among the highest in the world. Similarly, corruption is *the* key political issue in all societies undergoing post-étatist or post-socialist economic liberalization, from Estonia to India, Argentina to Taiwan, Mexico to South Korea, Turkey to Mongolia. In Russia, where private entrepreneurship was driven underground and criminalized by the state for decades, and organized crime had been among the key targets of glasnost (1988-1991), the continued presence of these phenomena should be less surprising still.

Yet, while shockingly high by the standards of mature liberal democracies, crime is also steadily declining in Russia, and in its organized aspect it appears to have undergone a classic transition from a violent war of all against all to more familiar and limited pursuits like drug-trafficking, illegal gambling, prostitution, and investment in legal enterprises. In meetings with owners of some of Russia's five million small- and medium-sized businesses, I am constantly told that organized crime has been steadily declining as an important issue. In some areas, it is no longer a problem at all.

In raising the issue of nostalgia, Ralph Slovenko again points to one of the most interesting phenomena of post-Communism and post-authoritarianism in general. Over the past decade, polls have consistently registered a "nostalgic" population of 15 to 20 percent (and sometimes much higher) in *every* post-Communist society. In the former East Germany, where the transition to capitalism was smoothed over by the nearly trillion marks transferred from the Federal Republic and by instant access to one of the richest welfare states in the world, at least 20 percent of adults voted until recently for former East German Communists; only a few years ago,

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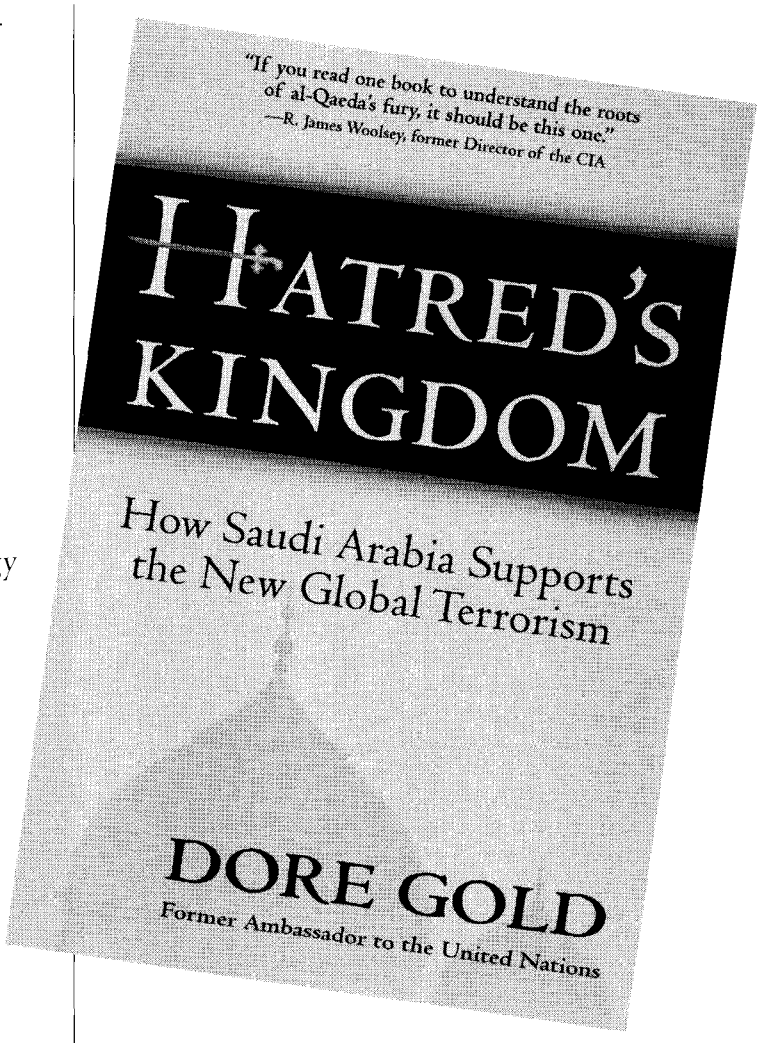
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fully 18 percent said they wanted a restoration of fortified borders and the Berlin Wall.

Why this should be so is a large subject. I find one satisfying answer in Isaiah Berlin's dictum that "Liberty is liberty, not equality or fairness or justice or culture, or human happiness or a quiet conscience." No wonder those over the age of forty, let alone fifty or sixty, have found it painful to adjust to the burden of personal responsibility, choice, and insecurity that is the obverse face of freedom. Add to this that when a totalitarian state collapses, the economy it owned and directed collapses with it, bringing immense short-term hardships in particular to the millions employed in the doomed giants of industrialization: the steel mills, the mines, the docks, the tractor and tank plants.

Is nostalgia lethal to progress? Under more or less normal circumstances, it does not seem so. In Russia, it reached its highest expression in the 40 percent of the popular vote garnered by the chairman of the Communist party of the Russian Federation in the 1996 presidential election. Since then, the popular appeal of the unreformed Left has declined steadily, with the Communists and their allies losing the plurality in the Duma in the 1999 elections. It is likely to decline to below 20 percent of the national vote in this year's parliamentary balloting. *Pace* Mr. Slovenko, the "nostalgic" are far from constituting the "vast majority" of Russians.

I am very grateful to Andrew Kuchins and Michael Mandelbaum for their generous words.

God in History

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter has demonstrated great insight and understanding in his multipart study of Judaism. But in his latest installment ["Judaism Beyond Words: Part 3," November 2002] he goes beyond the pale of traditional Judaism when he claims that God "has no power to intervene in history," and "God's withdrawal from Israel's history is a theological and historical fact." Where is God to be found, according to Mr. Gelernter? Only inside man. But if God's power to act is limited, then He is not omnipotent and—by traditional Judaism's definition—no longer God.

Mr. Gelernter also seems to abandon the Jewish belief in divine providence (*hashgacha*). After the Holocaust one might understandably question how the God of Israel could have stood by without intervening. But denying providence requires an explanation of how the Jews survived the last 2,000 years of exile and dispersion. Would Mr. Gelernter consider the establishment of the state of Israel after these two millennia of persecution an event free of God's intervention?

The theodicy of the Holocaust has confounded philosophers for over 50 years. But to "de-deify" God by stripping away His omniscience and omnipotence, as Mr. Gelernter tries to do, is not a satisfactory solution.

FRED EHRMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter is a fascinating writer whose talent for connecting disparate texts and images from the far corners of the Jewish literary tradition is truly striking. In part 3 of his series, he asserts that the Jewish God is not the God of history, and that God speaks to man through "the medium of each human mind."

Nothing in Judaism precludes acceptance of the latter point; indeed, the very notion of biblical prophecy implies that God communicates with man in this way. But if Mr. Gelernter can bring himself to believe that God can be found in the human mind, why is he so incredulous that He may also be found in history? "The world's most savagely tormented people," Mr. Gelernter writes, "could not and do not believe that God directs history or manifests Himself in history." But they could and they do, which explains the anguish and outrage that inform over 2,000 years of Jewish prayer.

According to Mr. Gelernter, the absence of the idea of a God of history from Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith is evidence of its not being taken seriously in Judaism. This is rather sophomoric reasoning, and it collapses when Mr. Gelernter refers to belief in the messiah as one of those thirteen principles. For Maimonides and others, after all, the coming of the messiah represents not an abrupt eschatological end of history but a divinely guided process that takes place *within* history.

As I point out in my book, *Holocaust and Return to Zion: A Study in Jewish Philosophy of History*, there is nothing more distinctive to Jewish theology than the concept of a God Who acts in history. Even after the destruction of the Temple, the rabbis never suggested that God had "withdrawn." It is difficult to see how the bold assertions in Mr. Gelernter's "theme picture" are, as he assures us, "based on Torah."

SHUBERT SPERO
Bar Ilan University
Ramat Gan, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

If we believe, with David Gelernter, that God's withdrawal from history after the destruction of the Temple was "balanced by His upwelling within man," we have fallen for the serpent's lie to Eve: "You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God." Mr. Gelernter's interpretation of Scripture makes it seem that Hannah Arendt was correct when she asserted (in a letter to Gershom Scholem) that the Jews no longer believe in God; they only believe in themselves.

CAROL K. THARP
Winnetka, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

There is a degree of antinomianism latent in David Gelernter's metaphorical interpretation of Judaism. It is unclear whether his reading is meant to complement or to replace a more traditional rabbinical one. Absent proof that he rigorously subscribes to the conventional interpretations as well, he risks seeming like a kabbalist of convenience.

SETH A. HALPERN
Scarsdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter's remarkable series of essays has provided much insight and

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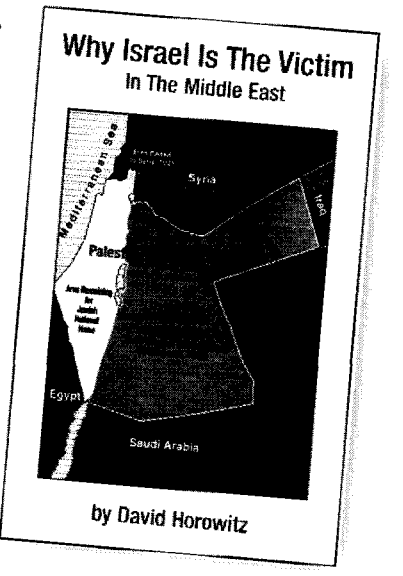
THE MIDDLE EAST STRUGGLE IS NOT ABOUT RIGHT AGAINST RIGHT...

It is about a fifty-year effort by the Arabs to destroy the Jewish state, and the refusal of the Arab states in general and the Palestinian Arabs in particular to accept Israel's existence. If the Arabs were willing to live peacefully as Israel's neighbors, there would be no occupied territories and there would be a Palestinian state.



The Arabs claim that Jewish settlements in the West Bank are the obstacle to peace. But there are Arab settlements in Israel. There are actually one million Arabs living in Israel who have more civil rights than the Arabs living in any other Middle Eastern state. So why should Jewish settlements be a problem for the Arabs? The reason is that the Arabs will not tolerate a Jewish presence in their states or anywhere in the Middle East. This is the source of the Middle East problem—Islam's war against the infidels; the Arab's hatred of Jews. The Middle East conflict is not about Israel's occupation of the territories; it is about the refusal of the Arabs to make peace with Israel, which is an expression of their desire to destroy the Jewish state.

The goal of Palestinian liberation, inscribed in its original charter, was the "liquidation of the Zionist presence." In the words of its leaders, it was to "push the Jews into the sea." That was the meaning of liberation then; it is the meaning of suicide bombing now. The root cause of the Middle East conflict is Arab and Islamic Jew-hatred. It is the Nazi virus revived.

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provoked much thought. In his latest installment, though, Mr. Gelernter makes one error. He writes, "Jacob is afraid of meeting Esau and guilt-ridden on account of Esau and (even more) on account of his dead father." His father Isaac, however, was then still very much alive, and would be for some time. In fact, the two brothers joined in burying him (Genesis 35:29). It is also worth noting that despite the deception that won Jacob his initial blessing, Isaac freely gave Jacob a second blessing (Genesis 28:1-4), firmly establishing him as the rightful heir of the Abrahamic tradition.

RICHARD D. WILKINS
Syracuse, New York

DAVID GELERNTER writes:

To those of my correspondents who are upset by my thoughts on God's withdrawal from history, it seems right to respond on two levels. The first has to do with the meaning of certain concepts: "omnipotence," the Lord's guiding mankind, the coming of the messiah. The second has to do with the meaning of Judaism and the agony of Jewish history.

To Fred Ehrman, if I argue that God has withdrawn into man, then God must be "not omnipotent and—by traditional Judaism's definition—no longer God"; and I have also denied the Jewish belief in divine providence. But I cannot accept Mr. Ehrman's idea of omnipotence. I think he has it backward. If God is omnipotent, then He can do anything He chooses; surely He can (if He chooses) withdraw out of history, and into man. If Mr. Ehrman believes that God *cannot* do this, then he is the one who is denying God's omnipotence. (To put it differently: a flesh-and-blood king can withdraw, Lear-like; how much more so can the omnipotent Creator of the universe.)

I believe, too, that providence and God's blessing can work from inside just as they can from outside. The difference is that, for God to work from inside, man must be God's active collaborator.

Shubert Spero writes that Jews "could and do" believe that God controls history—"which explains," he writes, "the anguish and outrage that inform over 2,000 years of Jewish prayer." Of course he is right that some Jews have this belief; my claim is that it is a false belief. And it seems to me that "the anguish and outrage that inform over 2,000 years of Jewish prayer" speak plainly of the Jewish wish for God to reenter history. "Pour out Your rage on the nations that deny You, on the kingdoms that do not call on Your Name; for they have consumed Jacob and destroyed his dwellings; pour Your wrath out on them!" In repeating this prayer at the Passover seder, are Jews saying that "contemplating Diaspora history, we see God's controlling hand"? On the contrary, they are begging God to *take* control. "Rule over the whole earth in your glory!" "Therefore we hope in You, Lord our God. . . . May You soon rule over them forever!"

That the coming of the messiah is "a divinely guided process that takes place within history," as Mr. Spero writes, was exactly my point when I described the Jewish belief that "it is mankind's responsibility, not God's, to cause this transformation and bring the messiah." Mr. Spero thinks that the approach of the messianic age must be "a divinely guided process," and I agree. But (once again) I reject the implicit claim that "guidance" can only come from outside, in the manner of hands on your shoulders pushing and steering. A man can also be guided from *inside*. (For that matter, even a missile can be.)

Carol K. Tharp believes that, by asserting that God has withdrawn into the Jewish mind, I am in effect agreeing with Hannah Arendt that "Jews no longer believe in God; they only believe in themselves." But Arendt was wrong and so is Carol Tharp. If Jews believed only in themselves, why would they pray? Granted, many don't. But of those who do, most believe in the God they pray *to*.

To Seth A. Halpern: "latent antinomianism" is a lot easier to detect than actual antinomianism. There was no antinomianism in my piece, much of which was based on my claim that "the four *amot* of halakha" *are* the Jewish mind; but I suppose anything at all can be "latent." Maimonides, too, was guilty of a highly "metaphorical interpretation" of the Bible and Judaism; for example, he regarded all mention of angels as referring "in truth to a prophetic vision or a dream" (*Guide for the Perplexed*, II:42). And people did accuse him of antinomianism. But they were wrong. Granted, no one accused him of being a "kabbalist of convenience"; to the extent I am a kabbalist—I do greatly admire many kabbalist masterpieces—I am a kabbalist not out of convenience but on principle.

But there is a larger point. I read Judaism as saying that, after the destruction of the Temple, God withdrew out of history, into the human mind. I do not claim that this is the only possible reading of Judaism (clearly it isn't); I claim that it is the only plausible reading. According to the other reading (which my correspondents seem to endorse), God is running history and, furthermore, God is good, but unaccountably He has allowed Jewish blood to run in sheets down the filthy pavements of history.

Theologians have tried for centuries to reconcile the propositions that "God is good" and that "God runs history." They have failed. Their attempted solutions are too Byzantine to be acceptable; would God have made the idea of "divine justice" so complicated that it needs a dozen pages of serpentine reasoning to explain, or explain away? And those arguments are too apt to dissolve into moral grotesqueness. Since the Holocaust, these efforts have become more frantic, more despairing, more unsatisfactory; ultimately, more repugnant.

Too often (for example) we sense an implicit belief that the Holocaust and the rebirth of Israel are somehow connected. Of course they are, historically; but God forbid that we mistake a mere historical connection for a theological or eschatological one, which would inevitably suggest that Israel's rebirth was some kind of *recompense* for the Holocaust—that it somehow squared the books.

Or: a brilliant scholar and theologian argued not long ago that we are to under-

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stand the Holocaust as fundamentally different from earlier persecutions of the Jews; it is evidence of a fundamental change in the cosmos, whereas they were not. Why? Because in the Holocaust, Jews were denied the opportunity to save themselves by renouncing Judaism—which means that they were also denied the opportunity to sanctify God's name by a deliberate act of martyrdom. And we are therefore to conclude that a child too young even to understand the *word* "martyr," murdered by a Ukrainian with an axe in 1919, is somehow less disturbing to the moral order of the cosmos than a child murdered by a German with poison gas in 1944?

Enough. It will not do; it is grotesque; and I believe it is un-Jewish. The rabbis of the Talmud begged us not to fall into this trap, not to allow ourselves to lapse into this kind of hopeless moral confusion. They said that God's presence, the *shekhinah*, went into exile along with Israel; that God suffers along with Israel; that henceforth God had nothing in His world but the four *amot* of halakha alone. Why do we refuse to take the hint, to follow the lead, to complete the thought?

This cannot be what God intended for Israel. When I argue that God operates from inside man, I do not deny that He has the *power* to change the world. I merely insist that He has that power only when man accepts His dominion and collaborates with Him. Mankind's whole history on earth shouts out loud that this is true.

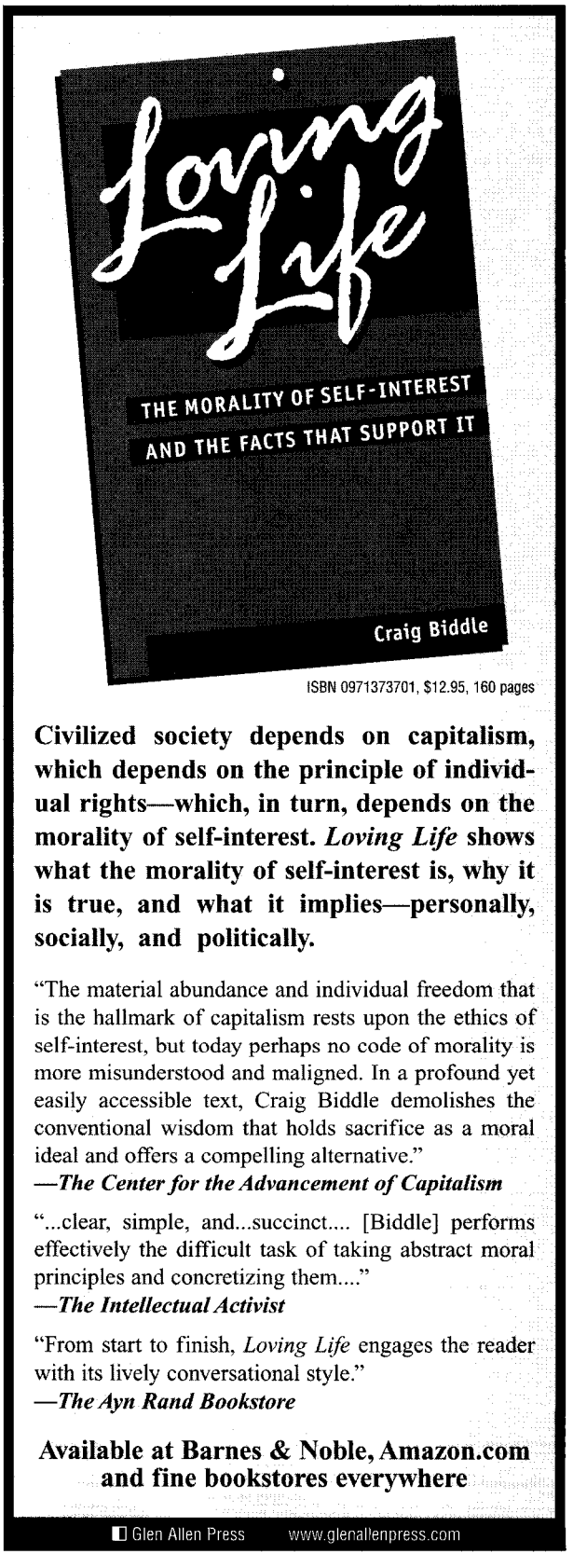
I thank Richard D. Wilkins for his letter. The power and poignancy of the story of Jacob's stealing his brother's blessing come in part from our assuming that Isaac is on his deathbed. Rebecca to Jacob: "Take it to your father and let him eat, so that he may bless you before he dies" (Genesis 27:10). We might guess that, subsequently, Isaac made a miraculous recovery; such things do happen. But this guess is unnecessary. A guiding principle of rabbinic Bible interpretation is that "there is no before and after in the Torah"—that the arrangement of the biblical narrative does not necessarily reflect chronological reality. (Commenting on Genesis 35:29, the verse cited by Mr. Wilkins, Nahum Sarna remarks that "this report of Isaac's death does not appear in chronological order," basing his comment entirely on calculations derived from the biblical narrative itself.)

Be that as it may, Mr. Wilkins is right to question my formulations; I am happy to change the offending passage to read "on account of his father" instead of "on account of his dead father," and I thank him again for his letter.

The Blame for Slavery

TO THE EDITOR:

Algis Valiunas's article on Thomas Jefferson and financial reparations for blacks is balanced, informative, and very nearly says everything that needs to be said on the subject ["Paying for Jefferson's Sins," November 2002]. Still, he fails to recognize the constraints Jefferson faced as he drafted the Declaration of Independence. Had Jefferson advocated freeing the slaves,



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there is no way the document would have been adopted by the Continental Congress. Freeing the slaves at one stroke would have impoverished plantation owners and undone the common law handed down to the colonies by England. Slavery, we should remember, was not confined to Virginia and the plantations of the South—it was thriving in the North as well.

Jefferson's claim that the English were to blame for slavery (which Mr. Valiunas mentions) was on the mark, and this should absolve America of its alleged original sin. Slavery existed in the colonies for two centuries prior to the formation of the United States. England was responsible for and profited enormously from the slave trade with the colonies—a trade that was sanctioned by the parliament and the king and that grew throughout the colonial period.

Jefferson had no hope of altering this overnight. So he did the practical thing: he left the question of slavery to a future generation to address in a long and bloody civil war that won the freedom of the slaves from their masters.

ANDREW P. O'MEARA, JR.
Fredericksburg, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

Contrary to Algis Valiunas, reparations to compensate blacks for the damages, unpaid labor, and institutionalized injustice of slavery is a much smarter policy than handouts, quotas, and other present-day programs. Blacks need and deserve the means to achieve autonomy (with or without separatism, as they choose) and the pride and self-development that go with it. Payment to them would acknowledge their lasting losses and deprivations, as well as the need to heal black distrust of whites. A critical mass of funds would make small-business development, state-of-the-art health care, and excellent education possible for the mass of African-Americans—and would make equality an eventual reality.

SHARON KASS
Takoma Park, Maryland

ALGIS VALIUNAS writes:

Andrew P. O'Meara understands the political difficulty that confronted Jefferson when he was drafting the Declaration of Independence; so do I. But I also find fault with Jefferson's stifling his own moral sense for the remaining 50 years of his life: he knew slavery was terribly wrong, and his failure to assert his moral authority upon the political passions of the time—by speaking out unequivocally, by freeing his own slaves—darkens the splendor of the principal author of American liberty and equality. Too much prudence there, not enough justice.

Also, Mr. O'Meara lets Jefferson—and the America of his day—off too easily when he pins the blame for slavery on England and absolves the United States of its putative "original sin." Suppose a child is born with an incurable venereal disease, contracted congenitally. When he comes of age, is he not morally responsible if he knowingly infects others with the sickness he came by through no fault of his own? No one living today is responsible for original sin; but each is responsible for his own sins, just as Jefferson was, and the other men of his time.

If Sharon Kass thinks that I think "handouts, quotas, and other present-day programs" to aid black American are virtuous and wise, she is wrong; in fact, I consider them mostly neither just nor prudent. But reparations are even more unjust and more imprudent. To paraphrase a journalist whose name I ought to remember, are people who have never owned slaves and who think slavery was an abomination supposed to pay trillions of dollars to people who have never been slaves in order to atone for slavery? Most white Americans will never be convinced reparations are just; it is exceedingly unlikely most *black* Americans will ever be convinced reparations are just.

The sins of our fathers are not our sins, and we cannot justly be held liable for them. My ardent hope is that the reparations fever will soon burn itself out, that the condition of African-Americans will continue to improve, and that in time Americans black and white will come to see that the only equality worthy of our demand is equality under the law.

Tough on Cuba

TO THE EDITOR:

Though I am pleased to learn that Mark Falcoff found my book, *Cuba Confidential: Love and Vengeance in Miami and Havana*, edifying [Books in Review, October 2002], a few points of clarification are in order. Mr. Falcoff's comment that I wrote "pejoratively" of former UN ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick is not true. No opinion whatsoever is offered in my book about Kirkpatrick or her politics; I mention only the fact of her relationship and partnership in a minor business deal with the late exile leader Jorge Mas Canosa, verified by Miami city records and the accounts of mutual friends.

Mr. Falcoff complains that my indictment of the Cuban exile leadership "is rich in half-truths, near-truths, and untruths," but he does not support this charge with any specific citation or documentation. Indeed, no one, to date, has pointed out a verifiable error in my book (which offers 44 pages of notes and research indexes).

I am also baffled that Mr. Falcoff can describe some of my comments about today's Cuba as "among the most devastating I have ever read," and then say that I am not tough enough on Castro apologists. For the record, I do not subscribe to the notion, ascribed to me by Mr. Falcoff, that "Communism may be bad, but anti-Communism is much, much worse." I tried to steer away from the ideological ranting that has reduced the Cuba debate to a hopeless 44-year stand-off.

Clearly, Castro's transition from "Communist" to the Caribbean's premier wheeler-dealer capitalist demonstrates how flimsy and plastic his underlying ideology is. I also emphasize that though the erosion of tolerance and democratic values in the Miami exile community has been serious and is worthy of our attention, it is not comparable to state-sponsored repression.

ANN LOUISE BARDACH
Carpinteria, California

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MARK FALCOFF writes:

There are various ways of being pejorative. One is to call people names. Another is to arrange a narrative in such a fashion as to depict people as villains or stooges. This is essentially what Ann Louise Bardach does—in consistently hysterical and overwrought prose—to Cuban-Americans and some of their American political friends (Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Governor Jeb Bush, etc.)—in her deeply flawed book.

I am frankly astounded that Ann Bardach seems to think that she has somehow managed to "steer away from the ideological ranting that has reduced the Cuba debate to a hopeless 44-year standoff." Not at all: she adds a good deal of ranting of her own. Despite what she says in her letter, I would regard her book as perhaps the *best* example of the ideology of modern American journalism as she and others practice it—"Communism bad, anti-Communism much, much worse." If, just to pick three names out of the "authorities" she relies on in her book, she does not think that Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange, or Rev. Joan Brown Campbell of the National Council of Churches, or Sandy Levinson of the Center for Cuban Studies is a Castro apologist, then I am forced to conclude that she does not know one when she sees one.

I could have bored my readers with endless citations of distortions and misinformation in this book; I chose the greater mercy of not doing so. But to satisfy Ann Bardach, let me just list four that immediately come to mind even without having the volume immediately at hand.

One, I am misquoted, even though the remark attributed to me appeared in the Spanish-language edition of the *Miami Herald*, presumably available at its website archive. In fairness, I suppose I should add that Ann Bardach did phone me when her book was in proof, possibly to check on the quotation, but I did not give her a chance, since I spent the entire call taking her to task for her irresponsible journalism.

Two, the political alliance between Congressman (later Senator) Robert Toricelli of New Jersey and the Cuban-American leader Jorge Mas Canosa came about not on Mas Canosa's initiative but quite the other way around. When the lines of Toricelli's congressional district were redrawn after the 1990 census, ladling the largely Cuban community of Union City into his bailiwick, it was the congressman—heretofore known as one of the more, shall we say, sympathetic members of the House of Representatives on the subject of "revolutionary change" in the Caribbean—who immediately went to Mas Canosa, asking, "What can I do for *you*?"

Three, contrary to what she writes in *Cuba Confidential* (and has apparently reiterated at a recent book forum in Miami), the *Miami Herald* advocated the return of Elián González to his father in Cuba. Whatever one may think of this position, it hardly suggests Cuban-American domination or control of that newspaper.

Finally, in spite of what Ann Bardach says, Jeane Kirkpatrick assures me that she is not and never has been a business partner of Jorge Mas Canosa. I choose to believe Ambassador Kirkpatrick over Ann Bardach, for reasons that should, by now, be understandable.

I do want to commend Ann Bardach, however, for seeing through Castro's Communism. This is no small achievement, given the way he has hoodwinked so many of her confrères in the journalistic, cultural, and entertainment community. And I am somewhat reassured that in this forum, at least, if not in her book, she declines to regard the political situation in southern Florida as roughly comparable to the one that unfortunately prevails on the island.

Slander

TO THE EDITOR:

Gary Rosen's dismissive review of Ann Coulter's brilliant book *Slander* is misguided at best [Books in Review, November 2002]. Coulter is a rapier-witted satirist who often indulges in hyperbole, though her hyperbole is backed up by demonstrable facts (in the endnotes Mr. Rosen denigrates). Speaking the truth when she debates is what separates Coulter from the James Carvilles and Paul Begalas on the opposite side. These people simply lie when cornered. She does not lie.

JED WEST
Woodland Hills, California

TO THE EDITOR:

In his review of *Slander*, Gary Rosen assumes that we live in a rational political environment, one in which debate takes place at a civil level. But he is wrong. Ann Coulter points out the decadence, dishonesty, and thuggery of the Left. Would Mr. Rosen suggest that Senators Biden, Leahy, and Clinton or their shills in the media—Katie Couric, Dan Rather, Peter Jennings, Tom Brokaw (the list is too long to continue)—are intent on rational and civil discourse?

JOHN DALE DUNN
Brownwood, Texas

TO THE EDITOR:

Gary Rosen does both COMMENTARY and the conservative intellectual movement a service by demonstrating the limitations of Ann Coulter's craft. If loud, shrill voices were more frequently answered with such thoughtful writing, our "national dialogue" would live up to its name.

SCOTT DINSMORE
Washington, D.C.

GARY ROSEN writes:

In the final line of *Slander*, Ann Coulter sums things up by calling her liberal foes "savagely cruel bigots who hate ordinary Americans and lie for sport." Would Jed West describe this as "hyperbole," "speaking the truth," or some subtle, satiric mixture of the two? Can John Dale Dunn find anything objectionable here, or are "dishonesty" and "thuggery" vices that exist only on the other side of the political aisle?

My thanks to Scott Dinsmore for his kind words.

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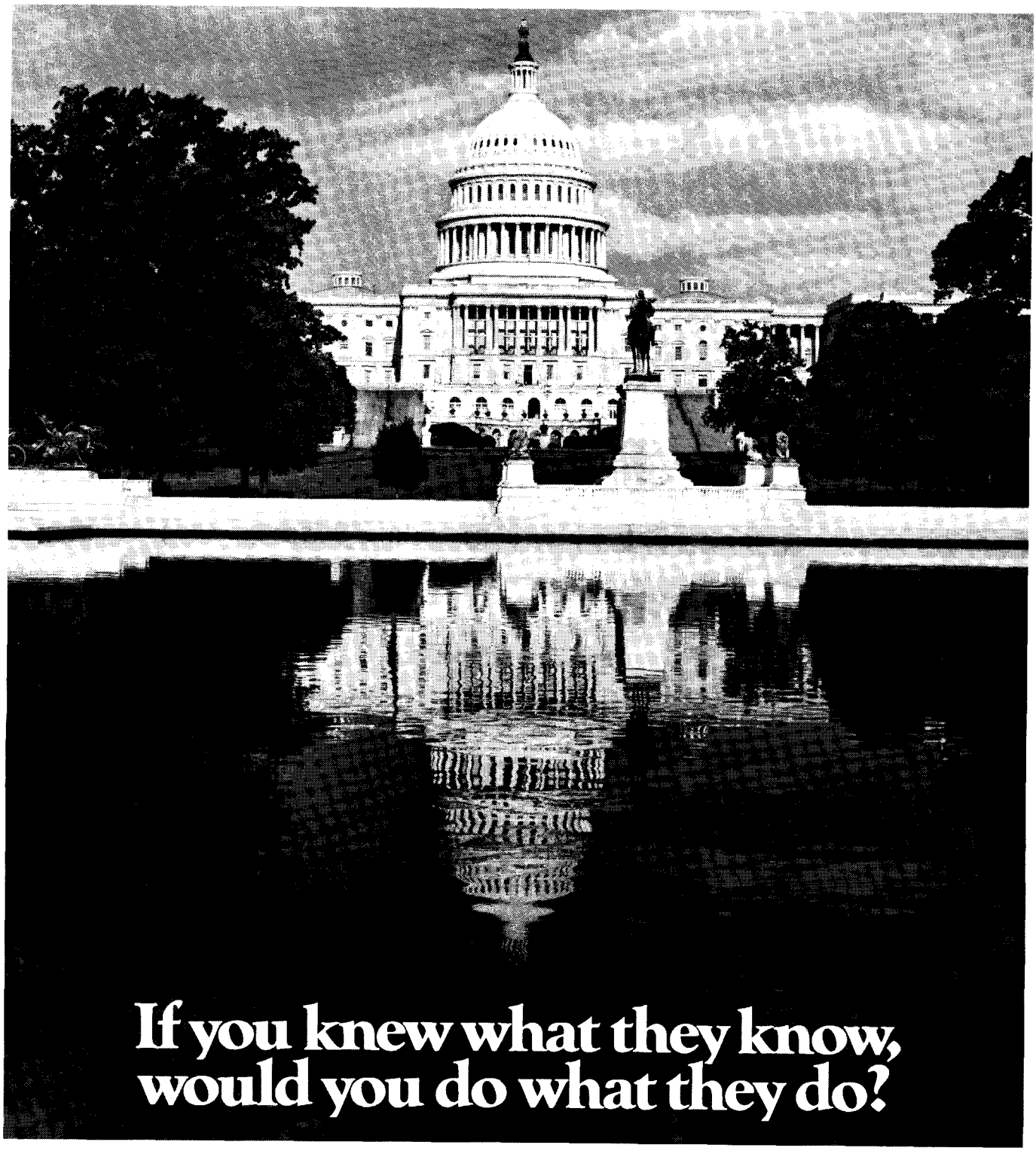

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Commentary
February 2003

Does Israel Need a Plan?

Daniel Pipes

THE YEAR 2002 will be remembered as a low point in the long conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, when diplomacy came to a standstill, emotions boiled over, blood ran in the streets, and the prospects of all-out war drew closer. Anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic furies seemingly put to rest suddenly revived with stunning vehemence. The existence of Israel appeared imperiled as it had not been for decades.

This picture is accurate as far as it goes, but it omits one other salient feature of the landscape in 2002. The year also witnessed a host of new plans, initiatives, and schemes for fixing the situation. None of these ideas came from the Palestinian side—hardly surprising, given that Yasir Arafat seems to see violence against Israelis as the solution to all his problems. Instead, they issued from various parties in Israel and the United States, with an echo or two from Europe and the Arab states.

These plans, of which the best known is the Bush administration's "road map," run the gamut from tough-seeming to appeasing. But they have two qualities in common. All of them give up on the Oslo-era assumption of Palestinian-Israeli comity as the basis for negotiation. But at the same time, all of them proceed from a fundamentally flawed understanding of the conflict and therefore, if actually implemented, would be likely to increase tensions. None of them can lead to a resolution of the conflict; that requires an entirely different approach.

SUGGESTIONS FOR resolving the conflict fall into three main categories. The first consists of proposals for Israel to retain a significant portion of the territories won in the 1967 war while effectuating a unilateral separation from the Palestinians living there. The toughest idea under this heading calls for an involuntary "transfer": expelling the Palestinians, if necessary against their will, from the West Bank and perhaps from Gaza as well. Once a fringe view, this proposal, thanks to protracted Palestinian violence, has begun to win support in Israel. A February 2002 poll showed 35 percent of respondents wanting to "transfer the residents of the territories to Arab states." A March 2002 poll, asking more specifically about "annexing the territories and carrying out transfer," found 31 percent in favor.

In a milder version of the same idea, some Israelis have called for encouraging a voluntary transfer. Under this plan, Palestinians who chose to leave Israeli-controlled areas could sell their land to the government of Israel, which in turn would help them get established in their new homes. An October 2001 poll reported 66 percent of Israelis supporting this scheme.

DANIEL PIPES *is director of the Middle East Forum, a columnist for the* New York Post *and* Jerusalem Post, *and the author most recently of* Militant Islam Reaches America *(Norton).*

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Some Israelis would like to redirect Palestinian aspirations toward Jordan, a country that already has a Palestinian majority. Benny Elon, head of the Moledet party, is today the most prominent exponent of this idea, which, under the name of "Jordan is Palestine," has in the past been associated with such figures as Vladimir Jabotinsky, Yitzhak Shamir, and Ariel Sharon. Another idea along these lines, espoused by the Labor-party politician Ephraim Sneh, involves a territorial swap: the Palestinian Authority would get some Arab-majority areas inside Israel's 1967 borders in return for giving up its claims to some Jewish-majority areas on the West Bank.

Perhaps the simplest proposal for separation is the one that does not require moving people. It is to build a physical wall between the two populations. "A Protective Fence: the Only Way" was a popular bumper sticker in Israel before the Sharon government began building such an electronic boundary along a 192-mile line approximately between Israel and the West Bank. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon favors a beefed-up version of this plan, with trenches and mine fields, arguing that in combination, walls and buffer zones "will contribute to the security of all Israeli citizens."

The second grouping of proposals concentrates on ways of working around the present impasse toward some sort of mutual accommodation. Here the key distinction is between those who emphasize a change in Palestinian leadership and those who emphasize mechanisms for improving the existing climate of mistrust. The former, focused on getting Yasir Arafat out, divide again between some (like Benjamin ben Eliezer of Labor) who favor a policy of waiting until a new Palestinian leadership emerges on its own and others (like Benjamin Netanyahu of Likud) who urge Israel actively to remove Arafat and replace him with a more pragmatic and flexible leadership that Netanyahu says is "waiting in the wings."

As for those who stress new mechanisms, they would offer benefits to the Palestinians on condition that the latter make certain changes in their internal arrangements. One such condition is good governance. Originally proposed by Natan Sharansky, Israel's deputy prime minister, this idea was picked up by George W. Bush, who devoted a major policy speech to the subject in June 2002. Proclaiming that it is "untenable for Palestinians to live in squalor and occupation," the President outlined a vision whereby, as a means toward acquiring a state that would live in peace alongside Israel, the Palestinians would develop "entirely new political and economic institutions based on democracy, market economics, and action against terrorism." He specifically mentioned transparent financial institutions, independent auditing, and an independent judiciary.

THE "ROAD MAP," first adopted in September, might be thought of as the State Department's belated answer to the President's June 2002 proposal. The product of consultations by the "Quartet" (the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations), it bears a name (the "concrete, three-phase implementation road map") that suggests its incremental quality. The first phase, proposed for early this year, would have the Palestinians hold "free, fair, and credible elections" and Israel withdraw to its positions of September 28, 2000 "as the security situation improves." The second phase, to kick in later in the year, will "focus on the option of creating a Palestinian state with provisional borders based upon a new constitution." The final phase (2004-05) will see Israeli-Palestinian negotiations "aimed at a permanent-status solution"; once these are achieved, Israel would pull back from territories it won in 1967 "to secure and recognized borders."

The American government regards the dates in the road map as guidelines, whereas the other three parties prefer to consider them hard and fast. Others find the whole road-map process too slow. Thus, the Israel Policy Forum, an American advocacy group, has developed a detailed four-step "on ramp" in anticipation of the road map's inception. No less impatiently, Prime Minister Tony Blair announced a series of meetings in London to include the Quartet, the Palestinians, and officials from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. (To make an agreement easier to reach, Blair conveniently left out the Israelis.)

The road map is vague about conditions to be imposed on the Palestinians—and specifically about what, if any, penalties they would pay for noncompliance. But there are some—and they make up the third grouping in the constellation of new ideas—who chafe at conditions altogether, preferring to proceed in the hope that an ample supply of carrots will lead to the desired result. Henry Hyde, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, has proposed a "Marshall Plan" for the Middle East that promises the Palestinians (and others) a comprehensive economic development program. The core of this idea, which has the support of Tom Lantos, the committee's ranking Democrat, is, in Hyde's words, that "peo-

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ple who had hope of a better life in economic terms would not resort to violence."

Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel, favors a more muscular and faster device. He calls for international troops to establish a "trusteeship" over the West Bank and Gaza and thereby lay the basis for "credible, representative, accountable, and transparent institutions." Thomas Friedman, the *New York Times* columnist, has proposed a scheme whereby "a joint American-Palestinian security force" would replace Israeli control over the territories, followed by American troops who would stay on "indefinitely."

Finally, there is the most popular idea of all: no transfer, no wall, no change in leadership, no conditions, no road map, and no foreign troops. Rather, Israel should immediately withdraw all its forces from the territories, dismantle all the Jewish towns and outposts there, and close down whatever remains of its machinery of control. The goal is to inspire a reciprocal mood of accommodation by the Palestinians or, failing that, a de-facto separation that would benefit both sides. "Leave the Settlements, Return to Ourselves" is how the left-wing Israeli organization Peace Now promotes this notion. Variants of the same idea have been put forward by such figures as Amram Mitzna (the recent Labor candidate for prime minister), by Saudi Crown Prince Abdallah, by virtually every European government, and by the overwhelming majority of leftists, academics, journalists, and diplomats around the world, not to speak of religious and business leaders.

EACH OF these plans has major deficiencies. The forceful removal of Palestinian Arabs from Israeli-controlled territories would indeed reduce Israeli casualties, but the political price, both abroad and within Israel, would be incalculable, rendering this option more fantastical than real. The voluntary departure of Palestinians is even more unrealistic. Jordan-is-Palestine is a non-starter for many reasons, of which the single most important is that neither Jordanians nor Palestinians show the slightest readiness to go along with it.* Since there is no inclination among Palestinians to accept Jordan as a substitute for Palestine, much less Amman for Jerusalem, the only conceivable outcome of such a policy, were it somehow implemented, would be to add Jordan as a base for the Palestinian conquest of Israel.

As for fences and buffer zones, they offer poor protection. Terrorists can go over a fence in gliders, around it in boats, or under it in tunnels; they can fire mortars or rockets over a wall, pass through checkpoints using false identification papers, and recruit Israeli Arabs or Western sympathizers on the wall's other side. Once a wall goes up, moreover, Israel would effectively surrender its influence over what happens beyond it, within the Palestinian Authority, including the latter's ability to import weapons and foreign troops. Nor, finally, would hunkering down behind a fence send the Palestinians the intended message, convincing them to give up on violence; on the contrary, it would likely reinforce an impression of Israel as a cowering and essentially passive society, thus spurring further violence. In sum: a fence may have utility as a tactical tool to save lives, but none as a basis for ending the conflict.

What about changes in Palestinian leadership? Every piece of evidence suggests, and every opinion poll confirms, that the assault on Israel of the past two and a half years has been wildly popular among Palestinians. Indeed, there is ample reason to believe that the "street" is more aggressively anti-Zionist than the leadership. Although Arafat promotes the ambition of destroying Israel, he is not the source of that ambition, and his removal would not eliminate it. More particularly, the ben Eliezer plan—waiting for a change of leadership—rests on the far-from-obvious supposition that the next leaders will be better than the existing ones, while the Netanyahu plan suffers from the kiss-of-death syndrome that applies to any Palestinian leadership selected by Israel.

Which brings us to the various proposals for conferring benefits on the Palestinians in hopes of moderating their hostility. The reasoning here is backward. Although good governance, for example, is certainly welcome in principle, it is less than desirable so long as the Palestinians continue to seek Israel's destruction. It brings to mind the notion of ending the cold war by encouraging "entirely new political and economic institutions" in the Soviet Union even as that system's core ideology remained fully intact. Why should anyone want to enhance an aggressor's competence and economic reach?

The same criticism, and more, applies to Congressman Hyde's update of the Marshall Plan. To the extent the original Marshall Plan worked, it filled a need for capital, which is hardly the Palestinian economy's main challenge;† the PA's termi-

* Adam Garfinkle and I discussed the shortcomings of this idea in "Is Jordan Palestine?" COMMENTARY, October 1988.

† The late P.T. Bauer trenchantly deflated the notion that the Marshall Plan deserves its reputation as a magically successful program.

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nally corrupt leadership would pocket much of the aid; and the Palestinian war against Israel has very little to do with poverty or any other economic issue. Fundamentally, though, the Hyde proposal suffers from the same conceptual mistake as good governance: it promises to reward the Palestinians even as they make war on Israel. Is it too banal to note that the original Marshall Plan was instituted three years after the crushing defeat of Nazi Germany in war?

Then there is the road map, which asks the Palestinians to undertake a temporary reduction in violence, in return for which they will gain a state; as such, the road map imposes even fewer demands on the Palestinians than the failed Oslo process that it has been designed to replace, and makes even less pretense of expecting the Palestinians to comply with its conditions. The "on ramp" and other such plans share precisely the same errors, some to an even greater extent. And the various proposals to use foreign soldiers and intermediaries in what is now a war zone are plainly unworkable; can anyone seriously imagine Americans, Canadians, and Europeans accepting fatalities just to keep Palestinians from attacking Israelis? It is preposterous, no matter how bravely they might talk in advance.

Finally, we have the immensely popular plan obliging a unilateral Israeli pullback from the West Bank and Gaza in return for precisely nothing, which is by far the worst option of all. If proof were needed, a precedent does exist: namely, the entire past decade, when, under Oslo, Israel took uncounted "steps for peace" and was rewarded by its Palestinian "partner" with a much more aggressive enmity. The outstanding instance, however, remains the unilateral Israeli pullback from Lebanon in May 2000, undertaken in the firm conviction that it would purchase quiet on Israel's northern border. Not only has that not happened, but, given Hizbullah's massive arsenal and overconfidence, the violence there is likely to get much more intense, possibly leading to all-out war. In the meantime, Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon played a major role in spurring the outbreak of Palestinian violence in September 2000. One can only shudder at the carnage that would follow upon Israel's headlong flight from the majority-Palestinian territories.

IN TRUTH, all these plans lead in the wrong direction, rendering resolution farther off than before. Real progress requires a different and more honest way of looking at the conflict as a whole. Let us begin by recalling certain basic points:

- Although a neutral term like "Arab-Israeli conflict" makes it sound as if both sides were equally to blame for this decades-long war, and must therefore be brought to compromise by splitting the differences between them, this is, as Norman Podhoretz has rightly insisted, "a deceptive label." A more accurate term is the "Arab war against Israel."
- Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza cannot be the core of the problem. The Arab war against Israel predated Israel's taking those territories in 1967; in fact, it was under way even before Israel formally came into existence as a state.
- Rather, the root cause of the conflict remains today what it has always been: the Arab rejection of any sovereign Jewish presence between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.
- The conflict continues into its sixth decade because Arabs expect they can defeat and then destroy the state of Israel.
- Israel cannot end this conflict unilaterally, by actions of its own. It can only take steps that will make it more rather than less likely that the Arabs will give up on those expectations.

At the heart of the problem, in other words, stands Arab rejection. However cunningly conceived, plans that attempt to outflank, leap over, or otherwise finesse this stubborn fact are doomed to failure. Instead of ignoring it, would-be peacemakers would do better to start by recognizing that the conflict will diminish only when the Arabs finally surrender their dream of obliterating the Jewish state, and then to concentrate on finding ways to get the Arabs to undergo what I call a "change of heart." How might that be achieved?

A glance at some of the conflicts of the 20th century provides a clue. Those that ended did so because one side wholly abandoned its war aims. Closure was achieved when, and because, there was no longer a fight. This is what happened in World War II and the cold war, and also in the wars between China and India, between North Vietnam and the United States, between Great Britain and Argentina, between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union, and most recently between the United States and Afghanistan. Conflict ended neither via negotiations nor by means of a wall but by one side accepting defeat.

Such a surrender can occur as a consequence of a military trouncing, or it can occur through an ac-

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cumulation of economic and political pressure. However achieved, the result must be unequivocal. Should the losing side retain its war goals, then new rounds of fighting remain possible, and even likely. After World War I, for example, defeat left the Germans still looking for another chance to dominate Europe. In like fashion, the wars between North and South Korea, Pakistan and India, Iraq and Iran, and Iraq and Kuwait have not ended, for the losing side has interpreted every defeat as but partial and temporary.

This historical pattern has several implications. First and foremost, it means that Israel's enemies must be convinced that they have lost. Actually, not all its enemies, just the Palestinians. Although weak by any objective measure as compared with the Arab states, Palestinians are the ones for whom this war is being fought. Should they, having suffered a necessary defeat, give up on the attempt to destroy Israel, others will find it difficult to remain rejectionist.*

WHAT WILL help bring about this Palestinian change of heart is Israeli deterrence: maintaining a powerful military and threatening credibly to use force when aggressed upon. This is not just a matter of tough tactics, which every Israeli government of the Left or Right pursues. It is a matter of a long-term strategic outlook. The trouble with deterrence from the Israeli point of view is that, rather than offering a chance to initiate, it is by nature a reactive approach: boring, unpleasant, expensive, seemingly passive, indirect, and thoroughly unsatisfying, quite out of step with the impatient spirit of the Israeli populace. But it works, as Israel's own experience in the period 1948-93 shows.

A bedrock condition of such a strategy—and one no less frustrating in the short term—is that Palestinian acceptance of Israel is a binary proposition: yes or no, without any in-between. This suggests, in turn, the futility of negotiations—at least until the Palestinians do accept the Jewish state. Such matters as borders, water, armaments, the status of Jerusalem, Jewish communities in the West Bank and Gaza, so-called Palestinian refugees—in brief, the central issues of the Oslo period—cannot productively be discussed as long as one party still aims to murder the other. In principle, something along the lines of the Oslo agreement could turn out to be workable—but only after the Palestinians definitively and unequivocally, and over an extended period of time, demonstrate that they have made their peace with the existence of the state of Israel as an irreversible fact.

If, moreover, we have learned anything over the past decade, it is that interim Israeli concessions are counterproductive and must be discouraged. As the Oslo experience proved, they inflame, rather than tamp down, Arab aggression. By offering repeated concessions even as the Palestinians failed to live up to a single one of their obligations, Israel signaled weakness. That is how, beginning in 1993, the effect of Oslo was to take a bad situation—there was some violence in the late 1980's and early 90's, but a mood of caution still prevailed on the Palestinian side—and make it far worse. Only when Palestinians are convinced there is no other way will an end to the conflict become conceivable, along with the mutual concessions that will seal it.

U.S. diplomacy has long proceeded on the theory that one must start with agreements between Israel and unelected Arab leaders; after such a leader has affixed his signature to a piece of paper, it is thought, feelings of amity will in due course develop among his subjects. That has not happened. Quite the contrary: whenever leaders like Anwar Sadat or King Hussein—and this even applies somewhat to Arafat—have signed agreements, their populations have become more, not less, hostile to Israel. It is as if the government is understood to be passing on the anti-Zionist burden to other institutions: the media, the educational system, religious leaders, the unions, trade associations. A piece of paper cannot of itself produce a change of heart, but can only symbolize it; treaties must follow, not precede, deep shifts for the better on the Arab side.

By the same token, it is a mistake to discuss "final-status" issues—i.e., how things will look when the conflict is over. There has been, indeed, much speculation about a future Palestinian state: its borders, the nature of its sovereignty, and so forth. All such talk encourages Palestinians to think they can win the benefits of a state without accepting Israel. This is not to say that policy planners in some sub-basement should not be thinking through the contours of a final-status agreement; but it is not for those in responsible positions of power to broach the topic.

Beyond these general considerations, there are specific steps that could be taken by the government of the United States. For one thing, the time has come for the President to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. By now, Congress makes an al-

* A glimpse of this dynamic could be seen in 1993-94, when Palestinian acceptance of Israel seemed in the making; the governments of Syria and Iran, among others, found themselves unable either to prevent Arafat from going in this direction or to pick up his anti-Zionist mantle.

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most yearly habit of trying to force the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, but the initiative invariably fails because the embassy issue is understood by the White House as purely a matter of symbolism, and the price to be paid in Arab and Muslim anger for a purely symbolic move is always regarded as too high. But the issue is not just symbolic. U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, especially if properly presented, would go far to indicate to the Palestinians that the existential issue is closed: Israel is there, it is permanent, and the sooner they come to terms with this fact, the better.

For another thing, much more pressure could and should be placed on the Palestinian side to put an end to violence. The U.S. government tends to see this violence as an aberration, a temporary anomaly in Palestinian behavior. Rather, violence stands at the very heart of the Palestinian attitude toward Israel, and stopping it therefore needs to be the priority of U.S. policy—including, in the first instance, by refusing to reward it financially or diplomatically. If the hope in Washington has been that, by gaining ever more of their goals, Palestinians would curb violence on their own, that approach has clearly failed; the time has come to focus directly on the violence itself.

Washington has also been largely indifferent to the massive campaign of lurid anti-Semitism and fanatical anti-Zionism conducted by the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, some of which are subsidized by American taxpayers. In particular, it has paid little heed to the hideous incitement of children to engage in "martyrdom" operations. This is an error that needs urgently to be reversed.

Finally, there are the so-called Palestinian refugees. Alone among all the masses of dislocated peoples in the years following World War II, Palestinians are frozen in the status of refugee—in some cases, unto the fourth generation. (The vast majority of those claiming refugee status were born after the events of 1948-49 that engendered the problem in the first place.) The reason for this anomaly is plain: the rejectionist impulse is sustained through the fantasy of a mass "return," and the ever-proliferating numbers of alleged refugees amount to an ever-sharpening dagger at Israel's throat. In this cruel charade, the U.S. government has been complicit for over a half-century, contributing a substantial percentage of the funds used to maintain the Palestinians' refugee status and to discourage their integration into the Arab states. The time has come to insist that they be assimilated.

THERE IS no short-cut, and there is no alternative. The only way to make progress in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is by inducing the Palestinians to surrender their murderous intentions vis-à-vis Israel. Not only would the rewards of such a surrender be very great but, ironically, they would be yet greater for the Palestinians than for Israel.

Although Israel today suffers from blood in the streets and an economy in deep recession, and although it is the only Western country that is constantly forced to defend its very existence through military force, it remains, for all its problems, a functioning society, with a boisterous political life and a vibrant culture. In contrast, the Palestinians are in desperate straits. The areas nominally ruled by the Palestinian Authority are anarchic, with curfews, road blocks, and violence defining the immediate parameters, and dictatorship, corruption, and backwardness being among the larger consequences. In the words of one sympathetic observer, Palestinians have been "ravaged by widespread poverty, declining health status, eroding education, physical and environmental destruction, and the absence of hope."

The Palestinians, in other words, are suffering even more from the consequences of their own violence than is Israel. So long as they persist in their ugly dream of destruction, they will be haunted by failure and frustration. Conversely, only when they accept the permanence of Israel will they be released to fulfill their considerable potential by building a prosperous economy, an open political system, and an attractive culture.

Much as the Israelis have to gain from a victory over the Palestinians, the Palestinians have more to gain from defeat. From the point of view of American policy, helping them to achieve a change of heart is thus an unobjectionable goal, beneficial to both parties. And while ultimately it is up to the Palestinians to liberate themselves from the demons of their own irredentism, others, especially Israelis and Americans, can indeed help—by holding firm against the seductive appeal of road maps that lead exactly in the wrong direction.

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The Catholic Crisis

Daniel Johnson

NOT SINCE Protestants routinely identified the pope with the Antichrist has the Roman Catholic Church been so demonized as it is today, when epithets like "criminal conspiracy" seem to trip lightly from the most respectable lips. This time around, though, many Catholics themselves have taken leading positions among the ranks of the accusers, while millions of other faithful Catholics find themselves bereft of counterarguments. For the bill of particulars against the Church to which I have belonged all my life is heavily documented, and it has every appearance of amounting to a litany of shame.

The scandal of sexual abuse by priests, in the United States and across the English-speaking world, has rapidly burgeoned into a sweeping crisis of confidence. The betrayal of ordinary Catholics, first by their priests and then by their bishops covering up for the priests, has sown deep discord between a hierarchy accountable only upward—to Rome—and a laity furious with those who have placed their children in jeopardy, concealed the truth from them, and dragged their Church through the mud. The catastrophic failure of leadership that began in the seminaries before spreading to the bishops and archbishops has finally embraced the Vatican itself.

The clergy's fall from grace has exacerbated an already acute falling-off of recruits to the priesthood, enabling liberal critics within the Church to press anew for abolishing the doctrine, recently restated by the Vatican, that priests must be celibate and male. Although, in Asia and Africa, the Church is young and growing, the demographic and social evolution of Europe and North America have trapped it between secularism and senescence. Despite the heroic efforts of Pope John Paul II, Catholic influence on moral, political, and cultural life in the West is in apparently terminal decline.

As if all this were not enough, the Church is in trouble not only on its domestic front but also in what might be called its foreign policy. A new book has reignited the longstanding controversy about the role of the wartime pope, Pius XII, in the Holocaust, and has broadened the indictment to take in the entire history of the Church, which stands accused of being the primary source of anti-Semitism in the world. As in the case of sex abuse by the clergy, which coincides with widespread hysteria about pedophilia, this accusation could hardly have come at a worse moment: thanks to Islamic terrorism, the parlous situation of Israel, and the revival of global anti-Semitism, the question of Jewish security has become more urgent than at any time since the Holocaust. In the moral climate of today, for the Church to be cast in the role of an unrepentant persecutor of Jews is no less damaging to its reputation than to be depicted as a front organization for pedophiles.

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HOW DID the Church arrive at this nadir in its fortunes? In the United States, 2002 will remain etched in the collective memory of Catholics as the year of hideous truth. The gravity of the problem first became apparent in January in the appalling case of John Geoghan, who abused some 130 boys while being shuttled among three different parishes by the archbishop of Boston, Bernard Cardinal Law. As the disease signaled by the Geoghan revelations began to seem more like a nationwide epidemic, the bishop of Palm Beach and the archbishop of Milwaukee resigned and senior members of the U.S. hierarchy traveled hurriedly to Rome for consultations. The disclosure of secret Church files confirmed that Cardinal Law and other bishops had personally sanctioned the practice of moving, rather than removing, priests known to be guilty of molestation, seduction, or drug abuse. In Boston, the bishops received a subpoena to testify before a grand jury.

By December, with the clergy of Boston joining the laity in openly demanding Law's resignation, the pope finally bowed to the inevitable. Today, as lawsuits mount everywhere, the specter of criminal prosecution and financial bankruptcy haunts not just the diocese of Boston but perhaps the entire American Church. In a confrontation between the culture of compensation and the Church, it is already clear which side is likely to come off worse.

Though the United States has been the eye of the storm, there have been sex scandals in other English-speaking countries, too, from Ireland to Australia. In Dublin, Cardinal Connell faces demands for his resignation from a thoroughly alienated laity. In Wales, the archbishop of Cardiff was forced to retire after two priests in his office were convicted of abuse. And in England, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Cormac Murphy O'Connor, is under intense pressure to step down over his decision a number of years ago to appoint a known pedophile priest, Michael Hill, as chaplain of Gatwick airport, where he went on to abuse more boys, including two who were severely disabled.

Nor has the crisis been limited to Anglophone countries: Cardinal Groener, the archbishop of Vienna, retreated to a monastery some years ago after a sexual scandal shook the Austrian Church to its foundations. In all these capitalist democracies, the phenomenon of the predator-priest fits dormant but easily reactivated stereotypes, inviting upon the Catholic episcopate the wrath of the world's most inquisitive, most prurient, and most irreverent media. Just as Cardinal Law was brought to book by the *Boston Globe*, so Cardinal Murphy O'Connor is being hounded by the British media establishment, led by the BBC and the (London) *Times*.

A PASTORAL authority built on trust cannot survive its betrayal, and for the victims of abuse, at least, that trust is forfeit. The damage to the prestige of the Church is all the greater because, in our culture, there is no crime more heinous than sex crime, and no victim more deserving of protection than the child. The impression of a sluggish, grudging, and secretive response to the crisis has also been exacerbated by the instinctive—but fatal—tendency of the Church everywhere, but particularly in Rome, to blame the press, and especially the Anglo-American press, for whatever ails it. There may be no other major organization so inept in its handling of journalists, even Catholic journalists.

Such ineptness, or worse, has characterized the Church's response to the scandals from the beginning. In the United States, initial and obviously misguided efforts at stonewalling suddenly gave way to a radical proposal by the U.S. bishops: "zero tolerance" for priests accused of sex abuse. This was rejected by the pope as contrary to the rights of priests under canon law, just as John Paul II also refused at first to accept Cardinal Law's offer to resign (while simultaneously condemning sexual abuse by priests more forcefully than ever before). But the bishops' guidelines were later accepted by the Vatican after modifications, and so, as we have seen, was the cardinal's resignation, thus redoubling the impression of an institution with much to hide and no direction.

In England, the Church's reaction took a no less self-defeating form. Two years ago, Cardinal Murphy O'Connor asked Lord Nolan, the man who had been charged with stamping out corruption in Parliament, to set up procedures for dealing with accusations of abuse by the clergy. The Nolan guidelines were duly adopted in September 2001, with the draconian result that a priest who is accused, even anonymously, of abuse is now automatically suspended from active ministry while he is investigated by the police and assessed by psychiatric experts. It may be months before he is told what he is accused of, and even if the evidence is insufficient to warrant a prosecution—as is usually the case—he may still be judged too dangerous to continue in his ministry (a decision now made by a panel of lay experts over whom the hierarchy has no control). An innocent man may thus be ruined on the strength of a denunciation that has never

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been tested in court—and in at least one case this has in fact already happened.

To non-Catholics, highlighting cases of false or malicious accusation must sound like special pleading for priests when the real victims are the abused. In dealing with those victims, however, the Church has faced still another dilemma. If it compensates them, it is accused of paying "hush money"; if, on legal advice, it refuses to pay, it is "heartless." The sums being paid out in the United States are sometimes so large that they may have a corrupting influence on the motives of those who engage in litigation. In such a no-win situation, defensiveness once again becomes the reigning posture.

In short, the Church has been playing catch-up, reacting clumsily to negative publicity rather than actively striving to shape public attitudes toward Catholicism. One is bound to conclude that its defensiveness betokens a deeper malaise, including self-deception on the part of many clergy. If those who speak for the Church cannot account for what has gone wrong in a manner that is persuasive to the world at large, they must be guilty at least of confusion and probably hypocrisy. In this light, it is hardly surprising that more and more Catholics are staying away from Mass, preferring no faith to bad faith.

One rare exception to the intellectual paralysis is George Weigel, the theologian and biographer of John Paul II. Weigel's earlier book on the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, *The Final Revolution* (1992), was a brilliant essay in political theology, while *Witness to Hope* (1999), his study of John Paul II, is much more than a narrative of the life and times of a great pope: it is a major contribution to the renaissance of Catholic thought that it describes. One of the most lively, learned, and articulate intellectuals on the American scene, Weigel speaks to an audience that transcends the narrow confines of Catholic theology; it is a sad fact that there are few, if any, comparable figures in England, the land of Newman and Chesterton.

Weigel has responded with alacrity to the crisis of abuse, seeing it as a challenge to clergy and laity alike. In his latest book, *The Courage to Be Catholic*,* he sets out an impressive program of sacerdotal rehabilitation that would uproot the underlying cause of sexual depravity: the betrayal by too many priests of their vows, their vocation, and their faith.

What made this betrayal possible, Weigel argues, is the "culture of dissent" that has permeated the Catholic intelligentsia, especially in the U.S., ever since the mid-1960's. Emerging in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, and constantly appealing for justification to the reformist "spirit" of that event, it has drawn its real energy from the secular liberationist cultures of the age, the culture of sexual liberation emphatically included. Within the Church, the "dissenters" seized upon the ameliorative impulses that animated Vatican II and proceeded to push them over into an open defiance of Church doctrines and discipline. In time, an ethos of moral permissiveness came to be at first tolerated in Catholic universities and seminaries and then actively inculcated; under its influence, Weigel writes, many clergy lost sight of what it was to be a Catholic priest: namely, an icon of Christ, wedded to the Church.

What such priests offered to the people was a diluted version of their faith, a capitulation to reigning secular norms; Weigel calls it "Catholic Lite." What they did to their own calling was much worse. Released from any more exalted sense of spiritual mission, in which asceticism occupies a natural place, some began to practice the lax morality their teachers were preaching, living down to the popular image of the repressed celibate who harbors within him the sexual predator. In this unwholesome atmosphere, a handful of genuine pedophiles and a much larger number of active homosexuals could infiltrate the Church, unhindered by bishops who anyway saw their function as bureaucratic and corporate rather than as pastoral and apostolic.

When the abuse scandal hit the headlines, it was defined by the most monstrous cases—in the U.S., John Geoghan, in Britain, Michael Hill—but the fact is that such pedophiles are probably no more common in the Church than in any other comparable institution of society. (Less than 1 percent of child abuse is committed by professionals like ministers, teachers, scoutmasters, etc., while the great majority of cases involve either family members or other juveniles.) In the case of priests, the seduction of prepubescent boys or girls is much less common than that of adolescents and young people, especially young men.

In other words, very few of these priests are, strictly speaking, pedophiles—a fact that, as Weigel points out, in no way mitigates the offense but does help to explain it. Society has given a tacit green light to the two most striking characteristics of the gay subculture: its romanticizing of promiscuity and its cult of youth. In England, where in the name of gay rights the law is due to be rewritten to eliminate any "discriminatory" homosexual offens-

* Basic, 208 pp., $22.00.

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es, a climate is being created in which the specific danger to teenage boys from predatory older men is no longer officially recognized.

To identify the Catholic crisis with the wider panic about pedophilia is thus to miss the main point, which has to do with the sinister nexus between abusive priests and a socially sanctioned subculture. For the Catholic Church to have immunized itself from *that* nexus would have required a general and determined effort to resist the spirit of the age—and this, as Weigel shows, is precisely what many priests set out not to do.

WHAT FOLLOWS? Though Weigel is scathing about the way in which the U.S. bishops allowed the media to make "zero tolerance" the criterion by which the Church's response to the crisis would be judged, his own criterion is strict enough. A religion of love and forgiveness, which holds that there is literally no sin that cannot be repented and no sinner who is beyond redemption, finds it harder than most to place abusive priests beyond the pale. This is not merely a matter of closing ranks.

Weigel concedes that the collegiate solidarity of priests and their episcopal "clubmen" has contributed to the widespread impression of a Church that looks primarily after its own. But there is, he holds, a deeper, existential reason why the Church is more reluctant to turn its back on a priest accused of sex abuse than a corporation would be to fire an employee accused of a felony. The reason is that ordination to the priesthood, itself a sacrament, can no more be reversed than baptism: even a "defrocked" priest, who is no longer permitted to say Mass, is still a priest.

Nonetheless, Weigel is adamant that the evil spirits should be cast out of the active priesthood. Quite apart from criminal penalties, those guilty of abusing minors should lose their clerical status: their sin is too disfiguring for them to perform their sacramental role. And Weigel goes much farther. Every priest who engages in sexual activity, even perfectly legal consensual intercourse with another adult, is guilty of a mortal sin, a betrayal of his parishioners, his superiors, and his vocation. Although those "lesser" offenders who habitually break their vows and lead unchaste lives must be given a chance to repent and change, a failure to return to celibacy must result for them, too, in loss of clerical status.

Similarly, in Weigel's view, homosexual candidates for the priesthood must be brought to recognize that their inclinations represent a potential danger to their ministry, and to acknowledge the special difficulties they may face in leading a celibate life. As for those who actively and proudly define the totality of their identity as "gay," such individuals are not, Weigel thinks, in the right frame of mind to preach or practice the Catholic sexual ethic, let alone to measure up to the "heroic" ideal of the priesthood exemplified and proclaimed by the pope.

If Weigel's analysis and reform program were to be adopted, one far-reaching consequence would be to recall the Church to its accustomed role as society's leading advocate of marriage and the family, a role surrendered in many presbyteries and seminaries where activist homosexuals have set the tone. Judeo-Christian morality is unambiguously heterosexual. While there can hardly be any question of a "witch-hunt"—especially in a society that enforces sexual preference as a human right—there is abundant room for a correction that might restore intellectual integrity to a Church whose priests have sometimes resembled Saint Genet (the honorific bestowed by Jean-Paul Sartre on the writer, convicted felon, and homosexual propagandist Jean Genet) more than Saint Joan.

GEORGE WEIGEL is hardly alone in thinking that the culture of dissent introduced into the Church after the Second Vatican Council proved to be, in reality, a Trojan horse. One of the Church's greatest strengths has always been its ability to combine repentance and renewal, to correct past errors without imperiling the *depositum fidei*, the "deposit of faith" accumulated over 2,000 years. This was the obvious intent of Pope John XXIII when he convened the Council. But adaptation and evolution are not the same thing as deconstruction and revolution—and revolution, or something close to it, is what occurred. The entire papacy of John Paul II since his elevation in the late 1970's has represented a gigantic effort to counter the devastating effects of this revolution within Catholicism and the Church, even as he has also striven to ensure that the Church continues to make itself at home in the world. Along with Weigel, hundreds of millions of Catholics everywhere have placed all their hopes for an honorable religious future on the success of this effort.

But these are not, by and large, the people whose voices are making themselves heard in the current fray. In stark contrast to Weigel, for example, stands the Pulitzer Prize-winning author Garry Wills, who for many years has been a prominent spokesman for the Catholic "culture of dissent."

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Three years ago, Wills turned his guns on the Vatican in *Papal Sin*, a catalogue of the corruption wrought by absolute ecclesiastical power; in a sign of where things stand within the Church's teaching institutions, this book has become a standard text in many Catholic colleges, several of which have awarded honorary degrees to its author. Now Wills has unleashed another broadside in *Why I Am a Catholic.**

It is a curious mongrel of a book: part memoir, part polemic, part apologia. Like so many of the better-known Catholic dissenters, Wills is himself a failed priest, and one whose rebelliousness against Mother Church and (especially) Holy Father manifests all the parricidal rage and self-absorption of an aging adolescent. As he tells the story here, Wills entered a Jesuit seminary during the mid-1950's, a period that even he admits was one of blessed tranquility for American Catholics. Personal and intellectual factors combined to prevent him from completing his novitiate, though for a long time he remained both theologically orthodox (his first book was an early contribution to the cult of G.K. Chesterton in the U.S.) and politically conservative (he was a contributor to William F. Buckley's *National Review*).

At this point in the book, however, the autobiographical narrative peters out, and we never learn how or why Wills turned against the Church that had educated and nurtured him, or even why he came to support the antiwar protests of the 60's and so broke with Buckley and the conservatives. Instead, the polemical aspect takes over.

Again like other dissenters, Wills confidently identifies his own doubts and resentments with those of Catholics in general, even as he simultaneously denigrates these Catholics for continuing to revere the papacy. Indeed, the papacy is his obsession, and the subtext of *Why I Am a Catholic* might be taken to read as follows: if I am a Catholic, it is despite the iniquities of that "deeply flawed" institution, which should render thanks to heaven that a serious intellectual like me still takes its "morally repulsive" authority seriously enough to debunk it. Yet why a book ostensibly devoted to justifying Catholic belief should concern itself so largely with the papacy is not at all clear; when Catholics ask themselves why they belong to this Church rather than any other, the pros and cons of this or that pope hardly come into it. Nor do the book's final chapters, an exegesis of the Apostles' Creed that constitutes Wills's apologia, gain anything from the potted and on the whole meretricious history of the popes that precedes them, whose slant is well conveyed in high-voltage chapter titles like "War on Democracy," "Reign of Terror," and the like.

Aside from the ventilation of one man's fury, one is entitled to ask what exactly is going on here. This brings us back to Weigel—or rather to the dividing line between those, like Weigel, who trace the Church's troubles to the culture of dissent and those, like Garry Wills, who trace it to the Vatican and more specifically to the pontificate of John Paul II. This debate is, in turn, a continuation by other means of the struggle that has raged since the 1960's over the legacy of the Second Vatican Council. One might even characterize the two parties to the struggle as "Weigel Catholics" and "Wills Catholics."

Such a debate might well be healthy, provided that the losing side did not try to provoke a schism. Wills likes to call his side a "loyal opposition," though a question might legitimately be raised as to whether the dissenters are in fact loyal to the Church as it is, despite its faults, or to a utopian Church of their imagination. As it happens, Weigel Catholics are at least as critical of those faults as are Wills Catholics, and, to judge by Weigel himself, can hardly be charged with failing to criticize Church authorities, up to and including the Vatican. But they conspicuously keep faith with the teaching authority of the Church, and no less conspicuously refrain from using clerical misconduct as a means of undermining orthodoxy.

There are other differences, some of them already rehearsed. Whereas Wills Catholics insist that the buck stops with the present Pope and his "reactionary" curia—above all the guardian of doctrinal orthodoxy, Cardinal Ratzinger—Weigel Catholics trace the present crisis to complacent and complaisant bishops, themselves the products of the permissive "spirit of Vatican II." Whereas Wills Catholics think that propensities to pedophilia and other forms of sexual abuse could be diminished by abandoning the ideal of a male, celibate priesthood, Weigel Catholics think the main problem is that priests are not celibate enough. Whereas Wills Catholics assert more generally that human sexuality is a personal issue about which the Church has no business being "judgmental," Weigel Catholics see sexuality in sacramental terms, interpreted through John Paul II's "theology of the body," and as part of a moral continuum that takes in such contested issues as abortion, euthanasia, and genetic engineering.

* Houghton-Mifflin, 390 pp., $26.00.

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As in medieval scholastic disputation, the *sic et non* style of this dialectic may seem arid to outsiders: a prime example of such sterility was the hatchet-job on Weigel's book and on Weigel himself that Garry Wills contributed to a recent issue of the *New York Review of Books*. But the stakes are very high, and a very great deal rests on the outcome of this internal struggle—now being played out, thanks to the sex crisis, before the eyes of the world. And the stakes have been raised still higher, as I mentioned at the outset, by the fact that the Church is being forced to fight on a second front: renewed accusations concerning its behavior during the Holocaust.

CENTRAL TO this second story is the role of the wartime pope, Pius XII, who as Eugenio Pacelli had formerly served as a papal nuncio in Germany and who has been portrayed by his critics as a pro-German anti-Semite. Pius XII's "silence" concerning the persecution of the Jews provoked controversy already in the early 1960's, when Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy* caricatured the then recently deceased pope as a callous bigot. Since then, a voluminous literature has developed whose main themes and findings have been dealt with extensively in COMMENTARY and elsewhere.*

To this literature must now be added Daniel Goldhagen's new book, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*,† the most comprehensive indictment of the Catholic Church so far. Not content to build up the case against Pacelli, Goldhagen argues that Catholic collaboration with the Nazis extended right across occupied Europe, and that the institutional anti-Semitism of the Church, manifest throughout its history up to and including the present, begins already with the Christian Bible.

Goldhagen's critique culminates in a program to "repair the harm." This would require the Church to commit itself to reforms as radical as those that transformed the defeated Third Reich into the present-day German Federal Republic. In particular, it would mean expurgating "anti-Semitic" passages from the New Testament, unless some editorial ingenuity could render them harmless; abolishing the "authoritarian" structure of the Church, including the doctrine of papal infallibility and the special political status of the Vatican; and initiating far greater efforts to uncover, acknowledge, and do penance for the Church's crimes against the Jewish people.

Goldhagen's earlier bestseller, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1996), made a colossal impact in Germany—thanks to its moral intensity rather more than to the quality of its historical scholarship. Millions of ordinary Germans, he argued there, and not a handful of psychopathic Nazis, made the Holocaust happen; and in acting as they did, they were motivated by the belief that eliminating the Jews was right and proper. His present book follows a roughly similar outline. It is an indictment of an entire religion, clergy and laity, over two millennia. But *A Moral Reckoning* has enjoyed nothing like the impact of *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. That may be because its author wields the blunt instrument of political science to hack through the delicate theological-political membranes of the oldest surviving institution on earth; or simply because, when all is said and done, there is really nothing new in the indictment.

Many others have denounced Pius XII over the decades—*Hitler's Pope*, by the former priest John Cornwell, being only the most recent and sensationalized example. In particular, though Goldhagen does not mention him, the Austrian Catholic Friedrich Heer long ago said all that needed to be said against Pius and the pre-conciliar Church, deploying the erudition of a great intellectual historian of medieval and modern Europe in support of the thesis that Hitler was an entirely typical product of the "political religiosity" of his day, and that the Church failed to resist him because it had too much in common with him. As for Goldhagen's case against the Gospels, that, too, is hardly novel, relying heavily as it does on the biblical scholarship of Geza Vermes, a former Catholic priest who has returned to the Judaism into which he was born and has written several remarkable books on Jesus from a Jewish perspective.

IN SUM, *A Moral Reckoning* is lacking both in nuance and in breadth of learning. If the book is nevertheless important, it is for a different reason: in one place, and between two covers, it manages to amalgamate a critique of the Catholic Church as the historical font of anti-Semitism with the critique of the papacy as an authoritarian theocracy and the critique of the Church as a reactionary holdout from liberal modernity.

The combination is a powerful one, lending aid and comfort to the entire "culture of dissent." Sec-

* For recent treatments in COMMENTARY, see "What the Vatican Knew About the Holocaust, and When" by Kevin Madigan (October 2001) and "The Pope, the Church, and the Jews" by Robert S. Wistrich (April 1999).

† Knopf, 362 pp., $25.00.

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ularizers and Wills-style Catholic modernizers would likely agree with Goldhagen that the Church must not only apologize unreservedly for fomenting anti-Semitism—most Weigel Catholics would endorse this, too—but rigorously purge anti-Semitic passages from its canonical texts and, above all, dismantle the surviving "structures of deceit." Like Goldhagen, Wills Catholics also demand the demolition of papal supremacy, the "patriarchal" priesthood, the doctrinal exclusivity of Catholicism, and everything that prevents the Church from accommodating itself to the modern world. The only difference is that Goldhagen makes these demands as a Jew, whereas others put them forward as a condition for their remaining in the Church.

But is Goldhagen correct that Catholic anti-Semitism is still a serious threat to Jews? And even if he were, does it follow that a Church that "embraced" the modern world would represent less of a threat? It was, after all, Pope John XXIII, an old-fashioned ultramontane Catholic, who was able to carry the 1964 Vatican Council with him, not least in breaking decisively with the past and repudiating once and for all the idea that the Jewish people bore collective guilt for the death of Jesus. And it has been John Paul II, the "anti-modern" and "anti-democratic" Pole, who has devoted so much energy to acts of reconciliation with Jews. Had the present pope not been equally intent on preserving his office intact, with all its magisterial authority, would he have been able to confront anti-Semitism within the Church with any hope of delegitimizing it?

The Vatican's recognition of Israel; the first papal visit to a synagogue, at which John Paul II paid tribute to "our elder brothers"; the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, with the prayer lodged in the Western Wall and the visit to Yad Vashem; the 1998 document *We Remember*, in which the Church pledged that "the spoiled seeds of anti-Judaism must never again be allowed to take root in any human heart"; and most recently the partial opening of Vatican archives on World War II—however belated or equivocal, these statements and gestures, along with many others, have brought about a historic shift in attitude. If not quite the total "moral reckoning" that Goldhagen and others demand, it is something no less extraordinary and arguably more valuable: Catholic anti-Semitism is withering away, while Catholic thought has rediscovered the Jewish core of Christianity and the Jewish identity of the Christian messiah.

"When she delves into her own mystery, the Church, the People of God in the New Covenant, discovers her link with the Jewish People, 'the first to hear the Word of God.'" This sentence from John Paul II's catechism places Judaism on a higher metaphysical plane than other non-Christian religions. No orthodox Catholic can treat Judaism as equivalent to Christianity, for the same reasons that no believing Jew can treat Christianity as equivalent to Judaism. Although Goldhagen castigates Cardinal Ratzinger, the pope's closest adviser, for having recently reasserted the old patristic doctrine that "outside the Church there is no salvation," this does not mean, as Goldhagen imagines, that Catholics believe, or are required to believe, that Jews are destined for hell. It is an expression of the Church's claim to absolute truth—a claim that Judaism also makes, and a claim that on neither side excludes mutual respect and even reverence.

It is true that the Church is *catholic*—i.e., universal—and that, unlike Judaism, it sees itself as "the sacrament of the unity of the human race," with a mission to gather together humanity. But this mission is eschatological, destined to be fulfilled only at the end of time, when the Church transcends history. From a temporal perspective, the distinction between Gentiles and Jews, between church and synagogue, must remain a mystery, whose full significance will emerge only with the unfolding of God's plan of salvation. Anti-Semitism, which scars the history of Christianity like the proverbial mark of Cain, gives the drama of redemption a tragic dimension. Primeval fratricide is implicit in the pope's recognition of the Jews as "elder brothers." By the same token, Jewish-Christian brotherhood is as essential to the credibility of the Church as it is in our age to the survival of the Jews. One wonders whether this cause would be furthered by a Church that was—as Goldhagen and so many dissenters demand—all things to all people, and had nothing to say to anybody in particular.

The demise of John Paul II has been predicted so often, sometimes with barely concealed glee, that one is tempted to ascribe his longevity in part to the determination of a stubborn Pole to prove his detractors wrong yet again. Even so, Catholics are preparing themselves for what will be, for most of them, more akin to a personal bereavement than the death of a public figure. To lose the incomparably greatest pope of the modern age would be a severe test at any time. To lose him in the midst of a crisis of confidence in the Church will be harder still.

John Paul II may have canonized more saints

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than any of his predecessors, but, in the eyes of many, his own example counts for more than any of them. If the free world already owes him a debt of gratitude for his indispensable role in the victory over Communism, it will soon owe him another, perhaps posthumously, for his unique achievement in recalling to global consciousness the values of Judeo-Christian civilization. The West is slowly realizing that these values are not universally shared, and that they must be defended rather than negotiated away. The Catholic Church has always been an integral part of that civilization, but it is the pope who has made its presence felt again. As Catholics wonder how they will surmount their present ordeal, they must also be lifting their eyes to the eastern horizon, where the storm clouds of Islam loom.

It is a paradox of our time that, just as the ideologies of atheism are losing their stranglehold on humanity and religion is reasserting its claim to be the decisive factor in our destiny, the legacy of secularization has left most people helpless to understand what is happening or why. An observant Jew or a practicing Christian in North America or Western Europe at the dawn of the 21st century is a one-man rebellion against the most dominant, the most ubiquitous, and the most profane culture the world has ever known. To live according to the Law of Moses, or to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is to court hostility, ostracism, or ridicule in those places, preeminently the universities but also in every other advanced institution—including many churches and synagogues—where cultural standards are promulgated and transmitted.

This has particular relevance to the confrontation between Islamism and the West. Our cultural arbiters do not like to view that confrontation in terms of political theology, as a working out through history of rival revelations and incompatible prophecies. Nor do they take seriously the radical distinction made by Muslims between the nation of Islam and the world of infidels, preferring instead a simple contrast between modernity and fundamentalism—a contrast that incidentally allows such phenomena as Orthodox Judaism and the Catholic Church to be relegated to the category of the retrograde and the benighted.

IN THE meantime, the thriving market for the supernatural, the miraculous, and the occult testify to widespread and unsatisfied spiritual desires, while other manifestations of faith, from good works to acts of worship, go unremarked. It is easy not to notice "denominations" that know their place and are not importunate—and most churches or faiths are indeed content to be ignored so long as they are not actively impeded.

The Catholic Church, however, is not one of those churches. It cannot be ignored; nor is its mission to covet a seat on the sidelines of the public square. It stands, in a resonant pontifical phrase, as a massive "sign of contradiction," challenging the assumptions of its environment not merely by what it does but by what it is—and, until fairly recently, there has been little reason to doubt what the Church is. In the eyes of Catholics and non-Catholics alike, there can have been few more recognizable brand-names.

I speak here, of course, as a Catholic. But for that very reason it may be fitting to give the last words to a distinguished American Jewish author, nonobservant himself but sympathetic to modern religious orthodoxy, and long alert to the potential threat from what he once called "an upsurge of anti-biblical barbarism that will challenge Christianity, Judaism, and Western civilization altogether." In 1979, addressing the situation of Catholicism on the eve of John Paul II's ascension to the papacy, Irving Kristol wrote:

> If I may speak bluntly about the Catholic Church, for which I have enormous respect, it is traumatic for someone who wishes that Church well to see it modernize itself at this moment. . . . The Church turned the wrong way [in the 1960's]. It went to modernity at the very moment when modernity was being challenged, when the secular gnostic impulse was already in the process of dissolution. Young people, especially, are looking for religion so desperately that they are inventing new ones. They should not have to invent new ones; the old religions are pretty good.

No one who has not blinded himself to the movement of history and politics in our era can fail to acknowledge the urgent truth behind these words.

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Lahore; or, the Islamic Gale

David Warren

By some cosmic accident, I spent the most impressionable years of my early childhood in the city of Lahore, in what was then West Pakistan. This was at the end of the 1950's and the beginning of the 60's, when my father was a teacher in the College of Art, across from the Lahore Museum. (In the traffic circle that lay between them stood the gun, Zam-Zamah, familiar to readers of Rudyard Kipling's wonderful tale, *Kim*.) My father earned a Pakistani wage—later, when he worked for the United Nations, we were rich—and in my early childhood we could hardly afford to live the life associated with North American professionals abroad, who by legend recline in gated, air-conditioned isolation.

I begin this way because there is so much nonsense in the air about Islam that it is necessary to state one's credentials, and to offer disclaimers. I am not an academically qualified person. Worse, a very quick check will establish that I am a hack journalist, filling space between the ads in Canada's Southam chain of newspapers and throwing electrons out into the million-channel universe of the web. The best you could say is that as hacks go, I am inclined to broader reading and longer walks with my thoughts than some of my colleagues. I have studied Islam in my own, essentially autodidactic way, and have obtained a knowledge that is wider than it is deep. While I have met at some length with people who indeed speak and read the classical languages—especially Arabic, Persian, Turkish—they have always had to explain things to me in English.

But already I'm being defensive! So let me say this: the oceans are broad as well as deep. The Islam with which we have suddenly come in contact—many of us for the first time in our lives, starting on the morning of September 11, 2001—is one of the larger oceans. Soundings are important, but it is also important to sail upon this great ocean, to try to see it in its scale and move beyond our familiar horizons.

Let me also add, from the beginning, that I am consciously a Christian. This makes a huge difference in the way I tack. To start with, Islam and Christianity are two evangelical, proselytizing faiths that for nearly fourteen centuries have been rivals for the allegiance of the world. No one can believe that the Christian account of God and Jesus is essentially true and simultaneously believe that Islam's account of Allah and Muhammad is essentially true. The contradictions are too large to be avoided, and they make for universal differences in outlook that our post-Enlightenment, "relativist" scholars have not begun to accommodate.

And yet being a Christian gives me a sympathy for believing Muslims that is not available to many

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secular humanists, or whatever we call them, who publicly dominate the Western world today and who lie especially thick over academia. For the believing Muslim may be a rival in the propagation of faith, but both of us are in a conscious relationship with God. Besides, Islam is something I have touched personally. Though I was never tempted to become a Muslim convert, I have some hint of the taste of it.

The sounds of the muezzin calling the hours of prayer; the daily rhythm that follows; the sight of humble men preparing their ablutions at the entrance to the mosque; the sense of the town shut up in the holy month of Ramadan; the blaze of stars as the day's fast ends; the smell and sight of dainty foods at Eid; the feeling of belonging to a very large, extended family; even the knowledge of being contained within a world that is complete, and which can explain itself in every little detail—this is part of what it "means" to be a Muslim, and it is no small thing. To this day, when I catch my first glimpse of the fingernail moon in the western sky, there is excitement at the beginning of a new month. And by the symbol of this crescent, and the star imagined within the partial circle of an uncompleted life, I feel a child again in Pakistan.

LAHORE IS a Sunni Muslim town, though even after partition from India it retained some religious minorities. They included, naturally, not a few Shiite Muslims; the odd quiet Hindu family; and a fairly substantial sprinkling of Sikhs. I was a Protestant Canadian kid attending a Jesuit school run by fairly brutal Irish brothers. The Roman Catholic minority in Lahore was and is a substantial one, estimated once at one-tenth of the city, many of them descended from converts made by the Portuguese when they arrived in India five centuries ago.

I must add here that India, in the large sense of South Asia, is very different from Arabia, or Persia, or Turkey, or even Egypt—the last of which provides an ambience that seems closest to it. India has been for many centuries a "multicultural" universe unto itself. Its religious diversity, even within the Hindu community, with its extraordinary variety in caste and cult, is unimaginable by European standards. And Muslim Pakistan is, after more than a half-century, still a new thing—not the idea of a Muslim state, but the idea of a state for Muslims only.

In my childhood in Lahore, this "spirit of diversity" was already reestablishing itself, even in the absence of large minorities. Lahore was Muslim, but in an Indian and thus ultimately rather easy-going and splendidly unorganized kind of way. The country had a very secular constitution; still in its first moments, it also had a Hindu minority almost as large, proportionally, as was the Muslim minority in neighboring India, and all minorities lived, at least in theory, within the full protection of the law. It was a secular Muslim state beside a secular Hindu one, and the division was more political than religious.

I know Lahore not only through the gauze of childhood memory but through a lifelong interest in the town, and through subsequent visits at various ages from my late teens onward. And I know that I am not dreaming about the Lahore that I fondly remember from childhood, because I have had ample opportunity to check my recollections against the memories and even the memoirs and histories of others. I have, however, come to suspect that the Lahore that existed around 1960 had more in common with all previous Lahores—the great cosmopolitan center that it was under the rule of the Mughal emperors, and that it remained under the Sikh maharajahs and the British viceroys, well into the first years of the secular nation conceived by the remarkable modern statesman, Muhammad Ali Jinnah—than it did with the Lahore that is emerging today.

Superficially, one sees only growth—more than six million people today where there were perhaps a million-and-a-quarter 40 years ago, or a couple of hundred thousand in the days of its Mughal glory. And the squalor that follows from this rapid growth must be seen to be appreciated, for the infrastructure of my childhood Lahore, already rather thin, has been unsuccessfully stretched to accommodate the extra millions.

The wealthy "New Class" inhabit the British-built parts of the city, and still employ gardeners. The Old City within its great walls, and the Anarkali district that spills out beyond them, remain largely as they were, a gorgeous maze of twisting lanes and sudden breathtaking architectural vistas, with sewers that often still work. But the rest—the "third city," as I'm inclined to call it—is a mushrooming brick, stick, tin, and mud-walled explosion, almost a refugee camp for the masses arriving daily from the countryside and one that functions on self-help principles.

Three Lahores, which have nothing much to do with one another, have thus replaced two that were in a dialectical relationship. In this respect, Lahore has parallels throughout the Muslim world, and indeed throughout what Mao Tse-tung first de-

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scribed as the "third world" of impoverished countries. And it is this mushroom growth of "the masses" that creates something in common among cities once quite unalike. For, at least in the recent past, the world itself looked much different whether you were standing in Lahore, or Kabul, or Tehran, or Cairo, or Nablus, or Baghdad, or Djakarta—and depending also in what part of each town you stood. Each view changed slowly from one generation to another, as the world passed slowly through its succession of stories, but today it seems to pass quite quickly, and the stories themselves have grown over-large.

As I have already hinted, in the Lahore of my childhood where I, a Protestant, attended a Catholic school along with many Muslim Pakistanis, it was very easy to be a Christian. Until recently, indeed, almost all of Pakistan's Muslim prime ministers, as well as party and military and business leaders, came from schools like the one I attended, and not only in Pakistan. The case was somewhat similar through most of the Islamic world, and in fact wherever European imperialism left its mark.

As the Europeans left, they left behind emerging ruling classes who, largely because of this education, did their thinking more in English or French or even Dutch than in Urdu or Arabic or Malay. To be modern meant, in practice, to have been educated by Christians, chiefly by Roman Catholics, many of them missionary monks and nuns. Upper-class parents sent their children to these schools not because they were Christian but because they were the only places where a decent, modern education was available—one that would equip them to understand and thus to survive in the big new modern world.

Through schools like my own St. Anthony's, the New Class was reproduced and sustained. This meant that at the top of society, there was an instinctive commitment to religious tolerance—for if you got rid of the Christians, where would your kids go to school? How would they learn to network? Correspondingly, at the bottom of society, among the common people, tolerance tended to be confirmed (whenever it was not disturbed) by the age-old human willingness to get along with your neighbors if only to avoid the loss of everything you have. From the bottom to the top, there were strong reinforcements for what I think of as the finest of political principles: live and let live.

At the top, more likely than not, the future movers and shakers also went on to universities in the West, to clinch the effect. And while they remained Muslim, at least nominally, they were also secularized and imbued with the Western distinction between church and state—or, in their case, mosque and state. They tended, unconsciously or even consciously, to look upon their own religious inheritance as backward, inferior, incapable of competing. It was only as Westernized, modern, secular, educated people that they could feel equal with their "mentors" in the West.

This did not make them closet Christians. Far from it—to become Christian, even in the secrecy of their own minds, would be to lose their claim to govern in a predominantly Muslim society. Those who were Christian to start with stayed that way, and could mix freely in the ruling class. Those who were Muslim to start with also stayed that way, at least outwardly, though they began to lose their bearings inwardly.

Most often, they became socialists of one kind or another, for in the world of only a few decades ago, that very Western ideology could still be presented as the coming thing, the cutting edge of progress. Most came to believe that the best way to modernize their societies was through central planning, and that their own class was in effect the socialist vanguard, the people who had the education and ability to deliver their peoples into the modern world.

How could they think otherwise? The crème de la crème of the elite went to the Sorbonne in Paris, to the London School of Economics, to the Universiteit van Amsterdam, to Harvard and Yale and Berkeley. Almost everywhere they landed they were presented with socialist ideals, seamlessly conjoined with elitism. And as the 20th century moved along, they further imbibed the guilt-ridden theories of oppression that held the West to blame for the backwardness of their own societies. Socialism was the answer, the medicine for oppressor and victim alike. Had more Muslim students gone to the Soviet Union, more might have rebelled against socialist assumptions—but on the Left Bank in Paris, or in smug parties in West Kensington, one could dream on.

Naturally, they also bought into another Western idea that had no place in any traditional Muslim order. They became nationalists as well as socialists, for how could you advance socialism except within a coherent national order? No matter what other syncretistic ideas might be entertained, including occasional fleeting visions of pan-Islamic union, the consolidation of the new nation state was presented as the first order of business, the immediate field of opportunity.

Hence the ideological currents running through

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the Muslim world in the generation before Iran's ayatollahs came to power: Nasserism, pan-Arabism, the Baathist parties of Syria and Iraq, the Bhutto faction in Pakistan, Sukarno in Indonesia, Algerian radicalism in the Maghreb. It was clear to all of them that this was the way forward—socialism "plus" this or that, and a kingdom of heaven on earth waiting around the corner.

IT WAS instead a catastrophe. Human nature being what it is, the laws of supply and demand being what they are, the gods punish grand ideological schemes. And just as the law of gravity operates against other forms of human flight, none of the socialist five-year plans ever worked; each invariably crash-landed. The only thing that did work, over time, was the elites clinging to power, trying to Westernize or modernize their societies in increasing frustration and confusion.

In some ways, Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Bashir al-Assad of Syria are the last survivors of that family of dinosaurs, the world that existed before the deluge of "Islamism"—the word we now use for fanatically politicized Islam. But elsewhere, too, the old elites, like beached whales, still nominally preside over the societies they helped destroy, economically, socially, religiously, and in every other practical way, so that there is nothing left for them but to find a new excuse for holding on to power, and someone else to blame for what happened.

In Pakistan, for instance, the elites are certainly still there, only beginning to be diluted by the arrivistes from the Islamist *madrassas*. The military, which, because it is crucial to national power, is about the only secular institution where advancement is sometimes possible on merit, has absorbed most of the first wave of the new arrivals—though the truth is that even the traditional, pre-"Islamist" *madrassas* made a fairly good sorting ground for military purposes. And if, from one side, the Islamists are arriving and advancing, from the other side the beleaguered elites are being bled by emigration. The engineers and accountants, the writers of regulations and other functionaries of the New Class, are leaving as fast as they can to the West, together with the more successful merchants and investors. It is an economic imperative, for where there is no oil to pump and refine, there tends to be precious little else in the way of an economy—and the prevailing mindset has been to live by tapping and entrapping and taxing rather than by enterprise.

With each passing year, more and more of the New Class wash their hands of all those five-year plans and get on planes for Europe and America. The New Class that remains, which by now has become rather an old class, finds itself mired in a more and more urgent search for some new silver bullet, some fine new theoretical scheme to replace the tried-and-failed socialism. The alternative is to slide down from eminence, into those mushrooming brick, stick, tin, and mud-walled suburbs that they must fear in a way that we, who have not seen them so close, can never fully understand or empathize with. It is no small thing to lose your place in the social order; and especially in an order with such deep shafts.

But here is the startling thing: in the last generation or two, many of these same people—not the arrivistes from the *madrassas* but the very New Class that I went to school with—have begun, either subtly or overtly, to buy into Islamism. For Islamism has been, since that heady moment when the clerics of Shiite Iran led the masses in disposing of the late Shah, the "coming thing" in the Muslim world: the new, essentially political ideology; the new patent medicine. I have been able to see this happening on the streets of Lahore, with my own eyes.

MY REMEMBERED Lahore, the city of 40 years ago, was, as I said, easy-going and accommodating towards its significant, mostly Catholic, religious minority; and I think even a Jew would have been acceptable, indeed welcomed as a curiosity. Shiite and Sunni Muslims tended to despise one another, but no more than Protestants and Catholics did in the good old days of Ontario. Shiites, realizing they were in the minority, merely tended to avoid exhibitionism. Hindus and Sikhs—the few who had not joined the exodus to India at the time of partition in the late 1940's—had to be more positively discreet about themselves. If there was tension, it was more likely to be between Sunni Muslim Lahoris by birth and Sunni Muslims who had arrived from various parts of India in the counter-exodus—a cultural, linguistic, economic, and even a communal but not essentially a religious squabble. Christians and Muslims had mutually accommodated.

But the Lahore of the last few years is a different place, especially for Christians. They feel, and are made to feel, "the pinch," as one would say in Lahori English. Pakistani Christians I have spoken with are haunted by fear of mobs, by fear of terror strikes against their homes or churches, by fear of sudden arrest on trumped-up charges of "blasphemy against Islam," from some anonymous neigh-

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bor bearing a grudge. And people who once would have gone to great lengths to get their names into print in the West are now terrified that I might quote them.

On my last visit, a few years ago, I myself was stopped in the street several times, along and around the main boulevard through the British-built and still outwardly most modern part of the city: the Mall, as it used to be called. And I was asked rudely intrusive questions by official-looking persons who would not, in turn, identify themselves. This was once inconceivable.

Who were these impertinent persons, freshly laundered and pressed in white short sleeves and Western-cut trousers? In a word, civil-service types—the children of the New Class. People who spoke good English, and knew what they were about. The sort of people who, themselves, would never be stopped by policemen, or by anyone else for that matter. Elite people.

But in another part of the city, barely a mile away, within the ancient walls of the Old City, I felt back in the Lahore of my childhood, a place where strangers were not interrogated, where—for instance—women may shop without male "minders" and without covering themselves from head to toe in the subtropical heat. A place where the real traditions of the city, its native "atmosphere," were still alive, and one felt free and secure.

This is a reversal, and it tells, I think, the whole story. In my childhood, if you wanted to see women in purdah, covered from head to toe, you went to the Old City. That was where things were "like in the old days," where tradition was still in force, in all its variety, from the greatest religious austerity at one extreme to brothels at the other. Along the Mall, you saw women in colorful shalwar kameez and bindis, or in the latest fashions from Paris or Milan.

Today, it is the other way around. The women in the New City are more likely to be in purdah, following like chattel behind husband or brother or son. But the moment you step through the gates into the Old City, you may see the faces of the women again, and catch the scent of their perfume. How to explain this? The New Class never did control the Old City; it still does not. It used to control the New City, and it still does. No, the difference is in the ideology of the New Class, the norms of life it is now trying to establish. For that New Class has bought into *shari'a* law, and by increments into a less and less compromising Islamism.

What we have today is the progress of Islamism itself in two, progressively converging, forms. There is the so-called moderate form—Islamicization of the laws and bureaucracy, even in the old civil courts. And there is the so-called radical form, visible in the growth of a terrorist underground, feeding on trouble in Afghanistan and Kashmir, and feeding off the large sums of oil-money arriving courtesy of the puritanical, Wahhabi sheiks of Saudi Arabia. By both means, by both routes, and floating on the tide of oil money, the same, very international ideology is being imposed, overlaid, on a traditional and very particular society, already shaken from its tree by a catastrophically failed socialism.

The same has been happening elsewhere in the Muslim world, and increasingly even within Muslim emigrant communities in the West, though the degree of Wahhabi penetration varies greatly from one country to another. (Pakistan got it full in the face, but on the other side of India, Bangladesh has largely escaped it.) It is not an evolutionary development, but a revolutionary one.

Through e-mail with acquaintances elsewhere in the Muslim world, I have received similar observations about many other cities. In all of them, the safest place for a foreigner, or for a member of some religious minority, is now probably in the winding lanes of the oldest quarter. The unsafest place is on a wide boulevard, in the middle of the "European" part of town. The "third city"—the hovels that sprawl all around—is in most cases still up for grabs.

In Cairo, I gather, the most unpleasant place for the foreigner is in Tahrir Square, or east toward al-Azbakiya—unfortunately just where he will also find the hotels. If there is going to be a terrorist strike, that is where it is going to be—or has been, in the case of the Egyptian Museum. Yet I am fairly sure, from what I hear and have recently tested, that one may still walk the miles of Cairo's medieval streets, and visit its ancient mosques and markets, without fear of molestation. The crookeder the streets, the straighter the people.

Ditto elsewhere throughout the Muslim world, wherever I have checked. Life goes on in the older parts of each city, a continuous, fairly leisurely development from what was there before. What we have come to call the "Arab street" is in the newer, European-built parts. What does this tell us about the great event—that gale of Islamism that is buffeting the present-day Muslim world?

The plausible explanation is that terrorists strike where the foreigners are, or where the local Christians or other minorities live. But Christians tend

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to stick to their own neighborhoods, for the very purpose of keeping their heads down and avoiding unnecessary trouble. And this plausible explanation does not account for that atmosphere of which I spoke above: the feeling of freedom you get as you pass through the gates into the Old City.

A better explanation is that where the foreigners stay is invariably also where the government is, its palaces and ministries. It is the most "official" part of any third-world capital. It is the best policed. It is where troops can most easily be dispatched against a riot, or to organize a riot "for show" when the television cameras from CNN or Al-Jazeera are in town. Like attracts like, and the political fanatic gravitates naturally to the political part of town: that is not really a paradox. Robbers choose banks, despite the inconvenience, because that is where the money is. Likewise, the power-hungry naturally gravitate to where the power is, even at the risk of a beating.

Yet the roil spreads, and eventually no part of the city is safe. Like a volatile gas, Islamism is being pumped into the building of Islam from both the top and the bottom. Through the spread of its so-called "moderate" form, it fills the void left by socialism at the top. And from the bottom, through the gradual permeation of the new Wahhabi-controlled *madrassas*, and through the pipes borne of the new pan-Islamic media, it arrives in like fashion.

I have mentioned that the *madrassas* were there before the Saudi sponsorship arrived, and, truth to tell, many strange things about the world were taught there, as I learned in my own travels through Pakistan in the last generation. I often heard outrageous statements about "the Jews" or "the Hindus"—statements that curled my post-Enlightenment ears. But I seldom heard them about Christians, no doubt out of courtesy to me—and once, when I pretended to be a Jew, I got only praise and welcome as "a brother" and fellow person-of-the-Book.

What was taught, then, was only potentially dangerous. A serene fatalism was also taught, and the habits of obedience to authority, and kindliness and hospitality toward any nonthreatening stranger. Jews might indeed be dismissed, in absentia, as "pigs and monkeys"; but it was nothing personal. (No one, after all, had ever met a Jew.) Toward Hindus, something a little more deadly was inculcated, but it traded on the memory of recent war. Toward Christians, and behind my back, there might well be rhetoric about "infidels"—and yet the very word was once used to my face with real affection.

Two things changed everything, in close interdependence. One was the new imams, breathing fire and brimstone and jihad out of Arabia. The other was the new media—in particular the new, international, Muslim mass media, another function of oil money.

AL-JAZEERA is by no means the only broadcast medium putting sometimes unforgettable images before people of things they never really thought about before. The broadcasters' habit of being sensational, inflammatory, was itself adapted from Western commercial models. The fact that sex and soft pornography remain unacceptable to the non-Westernized Muslim audience, even in such "Indian" environments as Pakistan, means that proportionally much more attention is devoted to violence. It is a way of holding attention; and in the absence of the sublimated or playful violence of Western entertainment—there is no tradition of cops-and-robbers shows—the violence must be sought in current events.

The result is that while almost no one in a country like Pakistan has ever personally met a Jew, almost everyone now thinks he has. Every day, in communal settings, people gather to watch a television screen that shows them images of Israeli soldiers in the West Bank and Gaza "killing Muslim children," as the voice-over is careful to explain. Increasingly they are also told that Christians are "just as bad as Jews"—and in that case, the radical imam may steer them toward the nearest church. What is amazing is that the audiences rise so infrequently to the bait.

The new media have conferred cult status upon characters like Osama bin Laden, who is presented as the Muslim world's Che Guevara. Their portraits are sold for small change in the market, to decorate the empty mud walls of the poor; and the names of Osama and other terrorist leaders are extolled in Friday preaching from the pulpits in spanking-new and impressively lighted Saudi-financed mosques. Even when the official news script on public television condemns terrorism, producers will broadcast pictures of Osama, or Saddam Hussein, romantically dissolving into pictures of great Muslim and revolutionary heroes. The hints are everywhere, just as revolutionary hints ran through our own culture in the late 60's and early 70's. The impulse to play with such images is "radical chic"—a kind of fashion statement—the difference being that in the present circumstances, the images convey more than a fashion statement. They meld with a quasi-religious message, calling for actual holy war.

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Moreover, through the misappropriation of *zakat*, or alms, even the widow's mite finds itself passed toward the terrorist underground; and habits of duplicity, formed over ages in which government was usually vicious and arbitrary, are put almost unconsciously to the service of violent and armed jihadists sheltering openly in mosques and private homes. For the people who must live around them, it makes no sense to antagonize these well-armed guests, who can be seen every day, by reporting them to some distant authority that is hardly ever seen. One learns to accommodate them: to live and let live with the terrorists themselves.

By these and many other devilishly clever devices, some of them the product of no conscious planning, the dry tinder of great masses of people, habituated to living under the thumb, is being inflamed. And the people themselves respond from out of a squalor that has been made the more unbearable by explosive population growth and the failed experiments in socialism.

The government responds with its own duplicity. When pushed, General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's dictator and nominally among the United States' more reliable allies in "the war against terror," will do Washington's bidding and round up known jihadists or those who have been foolish enough to make the Western news. But in the long intervals when no pressure is being applied, he must consider how his actions are playing out in the bazaar. Is he, for instance, showing enough passion for the cause of "liberating" Muslim Kashmir from India? Is he pushing the gathering Islamist underground so hard that it will bite him?

In such an environment, or such environments—now that Lahore is like so many other cities, and vice-versa—things can only get progressively worse. For the rantings of mad mullahs are never going to feed anybody, or instill the entrepreneurial spirit that will help an impoverished and unconfident people raise themselves up. All it can do is to inculcate anger, and turn that anger against the rich, unsuffering West.

In this sense, President Bush is quite right that the enemy is not Islam. In fact, traditional Islam, long accustomed to making its various accommodations with the realities of the world, is the only possible ally still in the field. One way or another, it had been peacefully adapting to whatever challenges came its way, at its own speed. It was perfectly capable of assimilating, however gradually, to capitalist modernity—as I saw in my childhood along the Mall in Lahore, and even recently within the walls of the Old City. Little by little, the new could be embraced, without the slightest assistance from political power. But suddenly all the ground rules are changed. The Islam that was itself the means to continuity has been suddenly twisted into a force of discontinuity by essentially external causes.

I am inclined to describe the present situation by the simile of wind. In small increments, people set their sails to the prevailing breeze. But if the wind begins to blow at gale force, they are carried where it listeth. Few people in any society have the personal strength and character and weight to lean into such a wind. What strength they have, collectively, comes from the Old City, not the New—from the old Islam, for as long as it can withstand the gale.

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Goodbye, Mr. Chipstein

Joseph Epstein

My interest in university teaching was initially aroused by the leisure it promised. "Every century has its cushy profession," the English poet Philip Larkin said. "It used to be the church. Now it's academe." Larkin was right. Do the math: assuming one does not teach in the summer—and the vast majority of professors do not—college teaching is roughly a six- or seven-month job, and during those months one generally goes into the office two or three days a week. Not bad, not bad at all.

I was thirty-six years old, and after holding a number of mid-grade editorial and government jobs I had begun writing as a freelance, a phrase the reality behind which comes nowhere near matching the dash and romance it seems to suggest. (Freelance: d'Artagnan off on a long weekend.) I had never held a position for more than four years, and did not so much plan my new jobs as flee my old ones.

Among the magazines I had written for was *Dissent*, the quarterly edited by the critic Irving Howe, and in the early 1970's, when Howe came out to give a talk at Northwestern University in Evanston, he dropped by my apartment. Talking about my brilliant career, he suggested that teaching might not be a bad idea; it would give me health insurance and other benefits, and make it possible not to have to scribble under full financial pressure. The combination of teaching and writing, he said, had worked well for him. He offered to do what he could on my behalf.

Before Howe left town, I had a call from the chairman of Northwestern's English department, asking if I would speak to the faculty and graduate students. It was to be an audition of sorts. I hacked together a half-hour's worth on the subject of the Man of Letters. Although I blew no one away with my brilliance, neither did I utterly disgrace myself, and soon there came an offer to teach six courses over three of the four quarters of the next academic year at a salary of $20,000. I would have the title of lecturer. On the day I accepted, I called my mother to let her know I would now be teaching at Northwestern University. "That's nice," she said, with her typical sang-froid, "a job in the neighborhood," and we moved along to more important topics.

Howe probably told the chairman of the department that I was a comer, and therefore a future ornament to the university. I held no degree more advanced than a B.A. in absentia from the University of Chicago, and although I had published a fair amount of intellectual journalism, and written a book that was about to be published on the subject of divorce, I had no real scholarly qualifications. Howe's must have been an impressive sales job.

The year I started teaching was 1973. The stu-

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dent revolt was over, at least in its to-the-barricades phase, but the more long-lasting effects had begun to kick in in earnest. A new air of informality had become almost de rigueur. Teachers called students by their first names, and some students returned the favor. Among the faculty, now the objects of routine written evaluations by their students, pedants were out, democrat-activists in. Soon after I started, I asked a colleague if many professors slept with their students. "You mean," he answered with a perfectly straight face, "many don't?"

Out of sheer nonconformity, I chose to teach in a jacket and tie. I also decided to call my students by their last names, preceded by Mr. or Miss (later, more hissily, Ms.). These two items set my general tone, which was slightly formal, maintaining a distinct distance between teacher and students. My thought was that if you're wearing denim and calling your students Chip and Muffy, it might be difficult to ask with a properly serious face what T.S. Eliot meant when he said that Henry James had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it. I preferred to keep that properly serious face, among other reasons because it offered a much better launching pad for irony, oblique insights, even jokes.

No training is available for teaching at the university level. One strains to remember one's own best teachers and to borrow from them what one can. At Chicago, many of my most memorable professors had been Europeans; they had about them a grandeur that was foreign (in every sense) to their American colleagues, who had to fall back on precision and, among a lucky minority, wit. Some of my teachers deployed an impressive erudition, a commodity I did not happen to possess, and some a no less impressive passion for their subject, which I thought I could muster. I asked a friend who had been teaching for a decade or so if he had any advice. "Yeah," he said, "never let 'em go outside. When the weather gets warm, they'll want to hold class on the lawn, as in those sappy photographs in the brochures. Don't let 'em do it." In 30 years of teaching, I followed this sound advice to the letter.

I was never given a class of more than 40 students, and so I rarely had to lecture for a full period, filling the remainder of the time instead with questions to stimulate (the hope was) interesting discussion. I was grateful for this, for even at the start I sensed that the national attention span had, somehow, diminished, and that short of relying on a whoopee cushion, setting oneself aflame, or establishing an atmosphere of menace, to hold a class's attention through 80 minutes could not be done, at least by me.

I say 80 minutes because I was permitted to hold two such rather lengthy sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays, an arrangement I much preferred to the standard three 50-minute classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I thought of myself primarily as a writer and only secondarily as a teacher, and the interval between Thursdays and Tuesdays would give me more time (or so I felt) for my real job.

Without the writing, would I have been a better teacher? I used to think so; at least I would have found more time to read up on my subjects, and more time to cultivate students outside class. But as the years went by, and my reputation as a writer began to grow, I also came to realize that from it derived much of my authority as a teacher lacking in the usual scholarly qualifications. Some of my students seemed quite as thrilled as I to see my name in print.

I could never accustom myself to being called Professor. Wasn't the professor the little fellow in the derby who played the piano in a bordello ("Hit it, Professor!")? And to be called *Dr.* Epstein was even worse. When so addressed, I was always tempted to reply, "Read two chapters of Charles Dickens, get into bed, and call me if things gets worse." Nor could I long forget that, university teacher though I might now be, I had never been much of a student myself. I had little memory of doing homework in high school, and in college, where I had made a greater effort, I fell just short of mediocre.

The problem was that my mind never wanted to stay in the expected academic groove but sailed on ahead, or sideways. (Today, of course, I love to read about authentic geniuses who did not do well in school.) Now, a year or so into teaching, I began to see that my real education would take place as a teacher. I found myself reading books—chiefly novels, though also bits of criticism and philosophy—with a new concentration. In preparing for class, all the puzzling passages had to be puzzled out, the Latin tags and foreign phrases to be translated, other people's interpretations to be considered. I read not only intensively but defensively, to avoid being tripped up, embarrassed, made to look foolish.

I had heard stories of teachers, famously good ones, who were so nervous before a class that they had to make a quick stop in the nearest lavatory to throw up. The late Robert Nisbet, who was known as a riveting lecturer, told me that he never entered a classroom without real trepidation. I was not in this league, but I did tend to nervousness, especially at the beginning, when my greatest fear was that

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I would never be able to fill those 80 minutes with my mini-lectures and my too often less-than-penetrating questions. Occasionally I had nightmares—pure anxiety dreams—about contracting to give a lecture to a large audience on, say, Hungarian literature and showing up without a single topic sentence in my head. Or I would be late and unable to find the classroom, or would be bringing the wrong notes for a lecture to the wrong class.

Part of the reason for my anxiety must have derived from the worry that, somehow or other, by my own incompetence or laziness, I would be made to look shoddy. If I were teaching the same novel two years in a row, I had to reread it fully each time lest I lose some small point that a student might raise to show me up (though none ever attempted to do so). As someone with his own low threshold for boredom, I also had a horror of communicating dullness to others. I worked up anecdotes, inserted bits of (to me) piquant literary history, told jokes where appropriate, and sometimes found myself doing goofy or slightly wild things. Once, in a class called "Advanced Prose Style," I wrote out the phrase "to walk" on the blackboard and asked if anyone knew how to split an infinitive. When no one answered, I let out my version of a martial-arts yelp, leaped in the air, and hit the board with a chop. Whether I did this to stave off their boredom or my own is a close question.

THE YEAR after I began teaching at Northwestern, I was offered a plum: the editorship of the *American Scholar*, the quarterly journal sponsored by Phi Beta Kappa (of which I was not a member). The pay was set at half the salary of a full professor, in those days considered to be $40,000. I continued to teach full-time for a few more years, then cut back to half-time, which translated into three courses over two quarters.

From this point on, I locked into a permanent repertoire: separate courses in Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and Willa Cather, with one of the trio giving way in alternate years, and always a course called "Fundamentals of Prose Style," my hardy perennial, for would-be novelists, poets, and essayists. I taught graduate students only once, and did not find it—nor, my guess is, did they find me—very rewarding. Their minds were set, they were in possession of a jargon, they had lost their amateur (or lover's) standing.

I was able to teach what I wanted because, with the rise of literary theory—deconstruction, the new historicism, feminism, queer theory, and the rest—nobody else seemed interested. Meanwhile, I had also become mildly notorious in the English department on account of two articles I had published—one in COMMENTARY,* the other in *Hudson Review*—on what I regarded as the betrayal of literature by university teachers. This led most of my colleagues to avert their eyes when I walked past them in the hallways. I was left to teach what I wanted, then, also because I was a minor pariah, which was fine with me. My real life was elsewhere.

I never had, or really wanted, tenure. Instead, each year I would receive a letter from whoever happened to be dean of the arts-and-science college, inviting me back and offering me a token raise. The smallest such raise was for $400, offered by a dean whom I had insulted in a remark that happened to get into the newspaper. In the course of a talk in Los Angeles I had said that there were two cultures in America, one composed of those who had elected Ronald Reagan President by a large majority and the other of those, many of whom resided in the best universities, who would sooner have voted for Louis Farrakhan than for Reagan. To illustrate the cast of academic thought in those years, I mentioned that my own university was just then trying very hard to acquire the services of a Marxist professor of English named Frederic Jameson, and in the hope of persuading him to leave his current position it had also offered his wife a teaching job. Then I added that, according to a rumor I had heard, the university was even willing to kick in another $18,500 a year for the Jamesons' dog to guard the gymnasium. That was what got into the *Los Angeles Times* and earned me my derisory raise.

Not having tenure meant not having to attend departmental meetings, which was no doubt for the best. I started teaching just as the ancien régime was giving way to the regime of the politicizers. The battle between the older guard and the young theorists of race, gender, and class came to be known as the culture wars, but the war was lost almost from the outset. Today, in most English departments, the two-penny Saint-Justes, Dantons, Marats, and real-life Madame Defarges reign without much interference. My negative feelings for them were quite explicit, registered through occasional writings on the subject—a fact, however, that also failed to win me friends among those who were still holding on, for the most part fearfully and surreptitiously, to the values of the ancien régime. One way or another, collegiality was not something that would be part of my experience as a teacher at Northwestern.

* "A Case of Academic Freedom," September 1986.

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And yet I found myself greatly engaged by some of my students. The English department had instituted something called independent studies, in which undergraduates selected teachers to work with them on subjects of special interest. One of the first to approach me was an attractive girl from West Virginia who wanted to explore the roots of her own extreme shyness; she wrote a beautiful essay that opened with an anecdote of how, in the laundry room of her building, when a man asked if she was finished with the dryer, she, unable to tell him that she wasn't, began to remove and fold her still completely wet clothes. Another young woman completed an essay titled, after Mary McCarthy, "Memoir of a Half-Catholic Girlhood"; this was about growing up in an intensely Catholic Chicago suburb with six brothers and sisters, about the falling-apart that took place after the reforms of Vatican II and the removal of her family to California, and about her own current tendency to wander into churches of various kinds—Buddhist, fundamentalist, you name it—in the all-but-lost hope of replacing the religious upbringing that had been so dear to her. Still another student wrote about the strains of alcoholism on exhibit in the fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald, showing how Fitzgerald had traced with precision the phases and manifestations of a disease long before it became a subject of medico-scientific interest. I thought this essay so good I published it in the *American Scholar*.

Of the few thousand students who passed through my classes, 30 or 40 impressed me with their seriousness and the heat of their desire to do intellectual or artistic work. Some of them went on to become journalists or editors or writers. Others, gifted in various ways but unable to decide what to do with their lives, drowned in what Kierkegaard called "the sea of possibility." Still others, I have to assume, did not want it sorely enough. On an irregular basis, most have stayed in touch and have become friends. Some of the earliest are now approaching fifty. My friend Edward Shils, himself then in his early eighties, once told me of a visit from two former students of his, one of whom was then seventy-seven and the other seventy-five. "Nice boys," said Edward. Only now do I fully understand what he meant.

My aim as a teacher was to establish a setting of good will. I did not have it in me to be one of those tough guys—like the legendary Norman McLean during my own undergraduate days at Chicago—who can heighten the tension in a classroom through the application of useful fear. I say "useful" since fear is certainly one motivating element in education. If you ever want to test this proposition, just tell a class that you intend to give everyone an A, that attendance is not mandatory, and that no one need take careful notes. Things will fall apart on the instant.

My own modus operandi in the classroom was to be a (very) poor man's Socrates, shooting out questions—"Ve haf vays of making you talk," I would announce in my best Gestapo voice—but grilling students lightly, trying less to embarrass them than to engage them in the significance of the proceedings. I was constantly and very pleasantly amazed at how little my students seemed to have been affected by the current academic craziness. No student ever attempted to turn Derrida or Foucault on me. I was never accused of homo- or any other brand of phobia. For a brief spell in the early 1980's, I felt the feminist pronoun police on my trail, ensuring that every "he" was followed by a "she," every mention of Tolstoy accompanied by a nod to Virginia Woolf. One year, at the opening of my Conrad course, a student asked "how" we were going to read Joseph Conrad, by which she meant what suppositions we were going to bring to the task: Marxist, structuralist, deconstructionist, multiculturalist, and so forth. I said that we were going to try to discover what Joseph Conrad himself meant to convey in his novels and stories, and that this ought to keep us sufficiently occupied to fill out a quarter. All I really wanted was to convince them that there was something called the moral imagination and that, outside of the way it played in the world, it tended to be found most impressively highlighted in serious novels. Most of them seemed to buy it.

As for how successful I was as a teacher in general, I haven't the faintest idea. Among those who took my writing courses, I could measure progress by how quickly their prose gained fluidity, shed itself of the most egregious errors, started to reflect the requisite degree of care and self-consciousness. But then I would hear from some of them a few years later and their writing would bristle with everything I had tried to knock out of them. Sometimes a student would confide that I and another professor were his two favorite teachers at Northwestern—the other guy being, inevitably, someone for whose intellectual quality I had a well-developed contempt. A girl who had studied Henry James with me told me, "I loved that course, but then I've always been a romantic." Since James has not the least thing to do with romanticism, in either its historical or its emotional sense, I had to con-

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clude that one of us had been asleep at the switch.

Student evaluations were of little help to me. In my 30 years, only one was technically useful: "He jiggles his keys." (No longer, kiddo, I would think as I slipped keys and loose change into my briefcase before every class.) Although the assessments were preponderantly enthusiastic, generous, even sweet, they were also vague: "entertaining," "knows his stuff," and—vaguest of all—"interesting." Only one of them sticks in my memory. It read: "I did extremely well in this course, for I would have been ashamed not to." Good to know that if I could not or would not instill fear, I could at least inspire shame, at least in the right sort of student. Alas, my evaluator neglected to tell me how the trick was done, or might be repeated.

By my final year of teaching I had concluded that, although I could make good students a little better, I could do nothing to improve the mediocre or the uninterested. In fact, I believe I made some of them a little worse, by confusing them with my high-flown talk. "[T]he power of instruction is seldom of much efficacy," Gibbon wrote, "except in those happy dispositions where it is almost superfluous." At Northwestern, most of my students had already developed the habits of achievement, but even among them, with their high SAT scores and the advantages of their middle- and upper-middle-class homes, only a small minority burned with the flame that Gibbon calls a happy disposition. That disposition has to do not with IQ but with spirit, the source of which remains a mystery.

I always taught to the best students in my courses. I knew no other way. Of the three writers I concentrated on during my last ten years or so—James, Conrad, Cather—all were highbrows, with Cather perhaps more accessible than the first two but, in novels like *The Lost Lady* and *The Professor's House*, formidable enough in her own way. Conrad's novels I used to describe as Henry James for people who like the outdoors. As the years went by, I lightened the load of the James course until I was omitting all the works of the so-called major phase—*The Ambassadors*, *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Golden Bowl*—and making do with something I thought of as Henry James Lite. James is the true test for the serious student of literature, and not many undergraduates nowadays seem able to pass it.

RECEIVED WISDOM has it that, each year, our students are growing dumber; one sometimes hears that they no longer read at all, but only watch television and fiddle with their computers. This is hardly a new complaint. As early as 1937, in a lecture entitled "Our Destiny and Literature," the poet Paul Valéry remarked that the thick air of distraction in modern life had done severe damage to "the powers of attention, meditation, and critical analysis." Today's professors nevertheless seem to believe that their students are possessed of some special ignorance, and love to tell stories that italicize this ignorance: "I asked the class what event marked the end of Communism, and one of them said, 'The destruction of the Berlin Mall.'"

I preferred not to go in for this kind of thing, remembering my own genuinely impressive ignorance as a kid from an unbookish home. Had anyone at the University of Chicago asked me, in 1956, who or what Diaghilev was, I might have answered, my voice atremble with uncertainty, "A city in the Ukraine," while worrying that perhaps it was a trick question and that Diaghilev was really the name of a Polish sausage. College professors will now tell you that none of their students knows who Mussolini was. But, then, in the middle 50's I did not know who General Foch was, I could not have told you anything about the Ottoman empire, and great swaths of American history were as hidden to me as the sun in January at the North Pole.

The chief difference between my day and now is that, though the ignorance may be commensurate, I do not sense the same embarrassment about it. Occasionally I would run a little cultural-literacy test, asking my students to name the dates of the Spanish Civil War or to identify Leon Trotsky, Gertrude Stein, and Nijinsky. What was sad was not the small number who knew but the even smaller number who seemed to care.

This seems to me to have something to do with the declining national attention span that I mentioned earlier. The more I taught my Henry James course, the fewer seemed the students who appeared able to stay alert even to the point of following the plot. The last time I taught James was four years ago, when I felt that only perhaps six out of a room of thirty could really return the Master's brilliant American twist serve.

Toward the end of this course, I led off one of the three sessions devoted to *The Portrait of a Lady* by asking a nice young man to describe Gilbert Osmond, one of the richest characters in 19th-century fiction. "Well," he said, without any malice toward me or any intention of shocking his classmates, "he's an asshole." (I suppose this marked an advance over the student who in a longish essay two years earlier had consistently referred to Osmond as Oswald.) Shocked his classmates may not have been, but I have to confess I was. Something,

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I realized, had changed in the nature of civilized discourse in America. I decided right then never to teach Henry James again.

In his journals, the Romanian writer Mihail Sebastian, who during the Nazi occupation of his country had to earn his living by teaching, notes that "neither my students nor my 'colleagues' have taught me anything new." In a strict sense, I have to say the same, at least about my students. They taught me nothing. What they did do, though, was remind me of the surprise of human possibility. I have taught courses that, so low was the intellectual voltage in the room, I felt the dismaying truth of W. H. Auden's remark that a professor is someone "who talks in other people's sleep." (Another, more pervasively truthful definition of a professor is "someone who never says anything once.") But throughout my years as a teacher—and especially in my writing courses—I was taken by surprise by students who displayed qualities I would not have expected to find in them.

This last quarter, one young woman, who wore punky reddish-pink hair and a razor blade on a silver chain around her neck, announced that she was tired of the nonsense of alternating feminine and masculine pronouns and in her own writing always used masculine ones—"and I make it a point to say 'mankind,' too," she added, "never 'humankind.'" She also wrote wonderfully and without the least hint of victimization about her complicated family, including an alcoholic father whom she had last seen when she was eleven. Another young woman with the perfectly innocent look of a Disneyland guide showed an astonishing mastery over language, and could sustain an extended metaphor over four full pages. A young man who rode a motorcycle and was a practicing rock musician wrote with terse but uproarious comedy about the zany behavior of otherwise intelligent people when they enter hardware stores. Still another young woman, with a fine smile and an ebullient laugh, handed in an essay about the treatment of migrants at the New Mexico border that was filled with lucid and persuasive political rage.

These were four members of a class of twelve that, for the nine weeks it met, caused me to walk into and out of it with a dance in my step. During our time together they were lively and bright, cheerful and receptive—everything one could desire from the intelligent young. In my closing words I said that if they wanted their final essays returned they would have to leave an envelope with their address on it in my departmental mailbox. "And I'm not talking about a self-addressed envelope, either," I said, "for we all know, surely, that an envelope cannot address itself." At the moment, it seemed entirely appropriate to end my 30-year teaching career with neither a bang nor a whimper but a small puff of pedantry.

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The Contract

A Story

John J. Clayton

My wife thinks I'm depressed. Certainly I'm depressed. Why shouldn't I be? But when she complains about my study of the holy books, she doesn't know. "Your practice is going to hell," she says. "You're too young to retire." I'm an estate lawyer, part of a small firm in Boston—maybe I have less push these days. I am conscientious in behalf of my clients. It's just that I don't work hard to replace them when they leave this world and their affairs are straightened out. "What are you *doing* with your time?" she says.

"What? I'm reading Talmud. I'm reading Midrash. This is not unheard of in our tradition."

"I look in the morning," she says, "and you've got a pile of volumes. Very impressive. I look in the evening, the books haven't moved one inch. But now there are more volumes."

"You should have been Sherlock's sidekick Shirley," I say. I laugh and pat her hand. I'm gentle with Natalie these days. Once upon a life I was an unholy terror as a husband. Now, no. Natalie gets tired. She's lost weight, she's lost hair, she covers it with one of a number of lovely silk scarves—paisley, mauve, and her eyebrows she pencils in like a film star from the 30's. She has a whole new set of clothes, which she says she won't ever outwear. A pharmacy of pills is lined up by her bedside. It's understandable she gets upset. She wakes up, nauseated, in the middle of the night, trying not to disturb my sleep, so I lie there and pretend for her sake.

I'll tell you what I do with the books. I'm investigating, I'm trying to figure out. I am, after all, a lawyer. So if I get stuck in a line of reasoning, I follow a thread back through Maimonides; sometimes it takes me to the library at Hebrew College in Newton where I examine records of rabbinical courts, or *responsa*, opinions of the great rabbis.

"You think that's going to get you anywhere?" she scoffs.

"No, sweetheart. Frankly, no. But there's a little comfort knowing great men have also tried to understand."

"There *is* nothing to understand," she says.

"That's your opinion."

"It's like a tornado. It just happens. You want to say God did it? *Say* God. Then say God when your shoe squashes a bug."

"I do."

She rolls her eyes. Same eyes when we met at Jewish summer camp 40 years ago. I was afraid of them then, too. Natalie can be ferocious. She's a very critical person when she wants to be. Until this year she was a high-school teacher of English, and I used to kid her, "God protect those children from your wrath." Often, say when I was soothing

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her, praising her the way we do every Friday night with the passage from Proverbs, "An accomplished woman who can find? Far beyond pearls is her value," that's when she'd go on the attack: "Beyond pearls, sure. You know what it's like to be a Jewish woman beyond pearls? With God a male—King, Father, Lord of hosts?" But nobody else better say one word, and you should have seen her searching for the crumbs of leavened food just before Passover. Again, ferocious. So she thinks she's earned the right.

"You're looking good today," I say. "Anything could happen."

"Three strikes and you're out," she says. Like: no palliatives, thank you very much.

Her speech has begun to be a little slurred.

I carry her up the stairs; unfortunately, it's not hard. She was always wiry, lithe, a gymnast when she was at Sarah Lawrence; but now the wire has gone soft.

I think about Moses, Moses having to carry the children of Israel, a terrible burden, as the Holy One carries the Universe. At the burning bush Moses said: please, go choose someone else. Was he afraid? Who wouldn't be? And humble—I'm not worthy. Well, who is? And also, I think, exhausted in advance, given the knowledge of what was coming. Because he must have known those Israelites in his heart—a willful, spoiled people, wanting easy victories and a varied diet, not particularly interested in being a nation of priests. *What's wrong with these people? Every day, food falls from the sky! When will they stop complaining?*

But maybe that's not the issue—the burden. Maybe Moses looked into the burning bush or the fire on the mountain and saw in advance the black smoke rising. *Am I willing to subject to such suffering the future children of our exile, children of children of children?* He knew—he warned them, didn't he, before he died? Maybe, at Sinai, that's what kept him up there on the mountain so long. *A land of milk and honey? Dear God: We both know what's coming. What kind of contract is this?*

What kind of contract? I wonder myself sometimes. I mean about my own two boys, their children, *their* children. Born and unborn, what have I gotten them into? It's not just (God forbid) future Holocausts. It's everybody's life—everybody's ordinary suffering, everybody's death. Losses.

I'm imagining myself in the desert. That's not so unreasonable, I'll tell you. Some nights, it feels that way. But I mean the desert at Sinai. Suppose I was a little child in the desert when the Lord appeared to Moses at Sinai, and now that whole generation is dead, my mother, my father, even Moses; we've crossed the Jordan and taken cities, and I've got grandchildren of my own. And as a child of the sojourning I wonder: was it worth it? Not being a prophet, I don't even know what's coming—exile in Babylon, imperial rule, the temple, its ruin and then its ruin again until we are all cast out. I don't know the tearing of flesh and the burnings to come, the humiliations, so many. But already I'm uneasy. *Is it worth it?*

Quietly as I can, I dress in the dark weekdays to go attend a morning service. There are always barely enough to make up a minyan, a quorum, so I feel bad if I would have been the tenth and I don't get there. She sits up, and in the dark her silhouette is of a pre-adolescent child. "I'll get your tea warmed up," I tell her. It's a brew of Chinese herbs she swears by.

"I can do it," she says. "Better go pray. What are you praying for this morning?"

I don't say.

"I'll tell you something. It makes me hurt more," she says, hacking up morning phlegm, "to see you praying. '*Hashem echad*?' God is one? Is that what you say? All right. The same force that organized the stars is at work in my body."

"Please. Natalie. Please." I go downstairs for her tea. Why be bitter, I think, make it all lousy, because you go through this a few years before I do? I'm as good as dead myself. What's a few years? All day I talk to her in my head. And what about the boys? Hasn't it been worth it? One son at Berkeley in physics, the other working for a trading consortium in Paris. She'd say she wanted to see them married, to know their children. And you and me?—I want to say—haven't there been good times?

She's right, of course—it's all one. I acknowledge this as I pray. Love and cancer. So does that mean there's merely amoral power in the universe and *we're* the ones who invented compassion, invented goodness, out of whole cloth because we couldn't stand it that our Source has no soul to care with, is care-less, couldn't care less if we live or die? And so we had to teach God how and what to be, and *that* is the meaning of our prayers?

It's hard for me even to say such words.

For, at times, I do feel held. At times, I feel, impossibly, it's all right, dear God, all of it. Maybe the division between love and cancer only exists in our narrow vision and it's *all* charged with love—and how can such love be a human invention? For look

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how incapacitated we are, how crippled. Look at the way we waste life—I mean, to get down to cases, Natalie and me, the way we've wasted our life. Take the time we're climbing a switchback on the Appalachian Trail and my elder boy, Michael, calls out he forgot his canteen a half-day back at the shelter where we slept, and I grouch at him, and his mother defends, and Peter, our younger, makes fun of the three of us; my jaw hardens, my eyes thicken with anger and headache and I stomp on ahead. And all this time there's mist breaking and through the trees a steep drop to a green valley and, beyond, high peaks of the Presidential Range, and we hardly know it's there.

The boys are frantic. Michael e-mails every day, passing along Internet sites he's discovered—experimental treatments for recurrent estrogen-negative breast cancers. Well, he's a scientist. Natalie deletes. And Peter calls from Paris, furious at the doctors for not catching it sooner. "Should I fly home this weekend?" he asks. "Don't even think about it," she says. "They're not putting me in the ground just yet. It's not time to say goodbye. Anyway, I don't want goodbyes." Then, hanging up, she reconsiders, calls him back. "Honey? I *do* want goodbyes. But not yet."

"There must be something they can do," Michael says, almost yelling at me over the phone. Neither son gets it yet. They think battle, strategy; they think, handling problems through human intelligence.

Me, I think: life. Its terms.

FRIENDS WHO know I'm religious and see it as a peculiarity they don't discuss now ask me, "Are you praying? I suppose you're praying." I'm praying. Every day in the *amidah*, the standing prayer, we say, "Heal us, Lord, and we shall be healed." And we can name those in need of healing, so I name "Natalie, daughter of Ruth"; then with her Hebrew name, "*Naomi bat Rut*." And at odd times I stop and say what Moses said when his sister Miriam became leprous: "*El na, refa-na lah*"—O God, please, heal her, please.

But Moses was Moses. The only healing I feel I have a right to pray for is of her spirit. Still, at odd times, I close my eyes and see the lumps dissolve, blood and lymphatic fluid carrying only pure cells to strengthen her. Or I talk to God, as if God were a difficult friend. Look, I say. Look. I admit we threw away Your gifts—all right, a lot, a lot! We didn't see what there was to see, didn't bless what there was to bless. We were small potatoes with each other, quarrelsome, self-righteous, petty in exactly the same way day after day. Please, I say, I'll pay attention. But heal her.

I don't tell my friends. People think it's primitive to speak to God as if God were a person. They may say, like Natalie, yes, there's an energy, constrained by law, an energy that sustains us at every moment—without it, there'd be no dance of quarks and electrons, no blueprint for molecules; it would all collapse into aboriginal soup, hot or cold. But why presume to *talk* to this energy?

I disagree. How many of us, really, can love an impersonal cosmic dance? I need to whisper to God, to feel God hears. I admit this presents an old problem. If God hears, what would it take for Him to change things a little? Job was cowed by God's power. But it's that divine power that makes us expect better in the first place. If you're hanging by your fingertips from a bridge, and a muscular friend comes along and you call out, *please, please*—wouldn't you expect a hand up?

"*El na, refa-na lah*."

Meantime, I prepare a cocktail of pills, cook food that's like baby food but that she can hardly eat anyway; I run errands, read my books while she reads hers.

"This is happening because I refused to wear a *sheytl*," she says to me a couple of days ago: the wig an Orthodox woman is supposed to wear after she marries. We've never kept a strictly kosher house, never been as strict as I'd like to be about keeping the Sabbath. But now she pulls a box out of a big shopping bag and says, "Don't look." Then: "All right, turn around." She's wearing a wig, light brown, a little stiff; she's bought it to cover her lost hair. "So? You think God will be pleased?"

"Oh, Natalie, this is not a punishment situation. Even as a joke." I look some more. "But I have to tell you, frankly, the wig doesn't look bad."

She laughs, harsh and quick like a cap gun exploding.

AT TIMES, afternoons, I play with her. We were never good at playing. At *being*. For example. Most winters Natalie and I went to the Caribbean for a week, with the boys while they were kids, then, empty-nesters, without. Frankly, I wasn't the greatest companion. "Do you know how much we're paying to drink this watery margarita? Including air fare?" "If I want to see fish, I can go to the aquarium in Boston." "Michael decides to scuba, so now I've got to shell out for *two* dive packages."

This December, I stop in at a building-supply place for two-by-fours and lag bolts, at an import

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store for bamboo screens, at a garden store for big tropical plants, and when Natalie goes down for her nap, laughing to myself, I slip downstairs to the unused floor of our split-level house. The boys grew up here. It's not a big house, but huge for just the two of us, so we keep the lower level for their visits. But now I remake the family room.

This takes two afternoons. I push back the living-room furniture we left down there when we could afford a new set for upstairs. I move the exercise bike, the television, and build the frame of an inner make-believe room, hang colored lights across the top and a heat lamp glowing down for the tropical sun. I make the bamboo screens into the walls of a beach shack. To one of the screens I attach a framed travel poster: a beach, blue water. I'd considered a bag or two of sandbox sand, but no—that's *really* crazy. But a foam mattress I cover with summer bedspreads as a beach blanket. I lower the ordinary lights, put reggae on the stereo, prepare fruit-and-ice drinks we can sip through straws. No pineapple—the sores in her mouth would burn; even apple juice I need to dilute. Final touch: I switch on the little rock fountain in a bowl to add the sound of moving water. Now, in swim trunks and a robe, I go get her. "Natalie? Natalie? Are you awake? There's something I want to show you."

She drags herself downstairs. And, praise God, she laughs. She giggles. "Max! A movie set."

"Lie down. Here." I give her a backrub with leftover suntan lotion so the smell will be right. At this, even Natalie grins. I lie back, margarita on my chest. And then what? I look up at the little lights and don't know what else to do. I sigh, take Natalie's hand, smell the smells, listen to music and gurgling water, pretend. "For once," she says, "I don't have to listen to you complain about overpriced restaurants." This means she's pleased with her personal theme park. Pleased I created a world for her. It's a world without dying in it. Not God's world. I made it myself.

"Close your eyes and get your expensive tan. Later on, we'll put on our masks and snorkel over to the reef to watch the technicolor fish."

I look over and see you shaking your head. Laughing at my foolishness? But no, you're crying, and you won't talk about it. I avert my eyes.

I imagine my ancestor in the Promised Land. He must have had a wife, and let's say they quarreled even crossing the Jordan, and now she's dying. And he feeds her dates and figs from their own trees, and she complains. "Why didn't you do this before—when I could enjoy it?" "I was too busy getting us here," he says. But privately, he has his reservations—the covenant, the journey, building the Promised Land. It's not all been milk-and-honey.

We followed Moses, my Israelite says to his wife. We were too afraid to face the Lord of Hosts ourselves. That cloud of fire, that terrifying voice. The ordinary cracked open to reveal the extraordinary. And the *shekhinah*, the Holy Presence—even me, a child, I "saw" it. But we begged Moses to do our *listening* for us, and I wonder whether he heard all there was to hear.

"Let me know Your ways, that I may know You," Moses asks the Holy One. Was there a secret Torah that made it all add up but that he couldn't transcribe—maybe couldn't even hear? I want to understand—as a lawyer—the contract. I imagine there was no room to negotiate. But maybe he was given to understand, in the *music*, that by the terms of this secret Torah, we would be held in God's hands, even if it doesn't seem that way.

These speculations don't impress my wife.

She gets tired, she gets so tired.

"Do you want to fly downstairs, to Aruba? You can rest, I'll give you a massage."

"No, thank you!" She bristles. "Enough massages." She refuses again the next morning, Friday. "Soon, I'll get plenty of rest." I go off to work but I have no heart in it and come home to make her a lunch she won't eat. "You think this solves something, makes up for something? Why do you feel so guilty?" she asks. "What did you do so bad?"

"Who says guilt?"

"What did you do so terrible you have to expiate with big tropical productions?"

"It was supposed to be amusing—a way of helping."

"Oh, I know you."

"You should."

"I was at least as rotten to *you*," she says. "You remember how mean I was at Cindy's party on Block Island?"

"No. You were . . . unusually mean?"

Now her hard laugh. "I like the 'unusually.' Can I take you up on that massage?" So we go downstairs. She holds on to my hand, only half as a crutch. "But listen," she says. "Please. No more reggae. How about Mozart?"

For years we've been saying, we should take time to listen to music, but we never do. Today, we just listen. Mozart, then Schubert. Natalie says, "I'm not so sick I can't give you a massage back." And that's how it is. I massage, she massages. Her fin-

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gers are weak, so weak. This beach resort, this land of milk and honey—so fragile.

It's almost the Sabbath. I run upstairs for candles and wine and the challah we froze last Friday because she became sick to her stomach. She lights the candles, we say the blessings, thanking God for the Sabbath. I recite, "An accomplished woman, who can find?—far beyond pearls is her value," and tonight she doesn't have any smart remarks. She closes her eyes. I drink the wine. She drinks her herbal tea. The endless heat-lamp sun, set on a timer to shut off when we sleep, shineth down.

This is my land of milk and honey. I'm the proprietor, forgive the shabbiness. Fragile, but the best I can offer. Even now, to say these words gives me goosebumps, as if I'm usurping sacred prerogatives, as if I'm saying, dear God, why can't You do something about that world of Yours? Of course, I'm only a subcontractor, borrowing the materials and the relations among atoms that we call Your laws of physics. I'm not starting from scratch. But in my world, thank God, there's warmth and no bugs. You're practically guaranteed not to get electrocuted; only the suffering that Natalie brings here comes from that other world.

You and me, Natalie, we signed a *ketubah*—our marriage contract—and God knows I can get annoying, just like you, I can get grumpy, just like you, but I'm going to comfort you, I'm going to carry you to bed, to wash you, to read to you if you're tired, I'm going to say kaddish for you if things don't turn out. In this world: Mozart, Schubert. In this world, possibilities bloom out of our imaginings.

All right, all right. I'm *trying* to be humble.

THE NEXT afternoon, Saturday, both boys show up at the door together. This must have taken no small arranging: from Paris, from San Francisco. Telephone calls, e-mails. Michael caught the red-eye from California, napped at a friend's apartment before meeting up with Peter. Peter, who has plenty of frequent-flyer miles, flew business class from Paris.

Hearing laughter, Natalie calls from downstairs, "Who is it? Who's there, Max?"

"Friends of ours," I call back. I put my finger to my lips. "Boys, this will sound peculiar, but have you packed bathing suits? Of course not. All right. Tiptoe upstairs to my bureau, bottom drawer, get into swim trunks, don't ask questions, and come downstairs to the family room. Please? Just do it."

"Max?" she calls up from Aruba.

"Just a minute, just a minute, sweetheart. We're coming."

They look at each other and back at me, and I raise a lecturing finger they well remember. Off they go, and back they come in swim trunks—baggy, I grant—with towels across their shoulders. They're both big guys with small waists. Michael is chunky, takes after me, a wrestler in high school. I look at him, I see myself as a young man. Peter is, I suppose, more handsome. He looks like Natalie, blue eyes, high cheekbones. He's wiry, lean, a runner. Big, both of them. I forget when they're gone for a couple of months that these aren't children anymore. They were our chief project, and praise God, they've turned out fine young men. Except for High Holy Days and Passover, they're not so observant, but I think that when they marry. . . .

Peter says, "Has Mom . . . has something happened mentally? What's going on?"

"Not to Mom. To *me*, if you must know. Boys, we're going to Aruba. No, really—I've made Aruba in the family room. It's a joke—but not just a joke."

And they look at each other and follow me to the now unused, once-jumbled-with-life lower floor of the split-level. Natalie sits up and immediately sinks back onto the beach blanket in tears, and they hug and kiss her. I say, "Gently, boys . . . gently," and they're laughing. "Your father!" she says.

And I think, I'm not acting in the place of God. This is it—this is how God operates. Through us.

We sit cross-legged on the beach blanket, I get fruit drinks. Now it's Natalie who improvises. "Isn't this beach nice? You see? Not in the least crowded. And wait till you see the luxury accommodations." It tires her out. She lies down again and from the way she's moving her tongue in her cheek, I know it's time to get her Nystatin to soothe her mouth. Michael is holding her hand and admiring the tropical décor and the view. Peter is in a different script—he's banging his fist on the mattress. He thinks she doesn't know, but he's wrong, she knows, and I put my hand over his fist and hold on.

"I don't have the heart for this," he whispers.

I tell him, "You do."

Michael tells her about Sophie and Aaron. "Getting married. And Arnie's getting married. And Saul."

"Who's Saul?"

"Saul Kaminsky."

"Oh, you mean Jessie's friend. Saul's getting married. Unbelievable. And you?"

"Not yet. But Mom, I've got news," Michael says. "A post-doc. I'll be working with George Singer next year. It's perfect. And Pete—he's got good news too, Mom." And Peter says, "Just that Chase is courting me. Maybe for London, more

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likely for New York. I'll be able to get up to see you a lot."

She scowls. "Make sure you're not doing it for me. I'll get furious if I think you're doing it for me."

Peter broods. Michael tells Natalie about new medical research: a few studies show that people who get prayed for—even when they don't know it, even when they don't know the people doing the praying—are more likely to get better than other people. Natalie, wanting to comfort Michael, nods—but she sends me a look. I try to liven things up. "So—how does this compare to Aruba?" The three of them are silent. I get nostalgic. "Remember that beautiful empty beach? Remember snorkeling by the reef?" Silence. I'd brought downstairs an album of family pictures but I figure, this isn't the time. Everyone looks around at this Aruba of mine. I become defensive. "Well, if you'd rather, we can go upstairs."

Peter says, "I remember Aruba."

"Can't forget it," Michael says.

Natalie sighs. "Max, they mean that terrible fight we had."

"We had a terrible fight?"

"Don't you remember? We stayed on one end of the beach not talking to each other, and the boys stayed on the other end of the beach as far away as they could get."

"They did? What was it about? I honestly can't remember. Anyway, does it matter? In my Aruba we're going to get it right."

"Max."

But now I remember the fight and fall silent myself, because there are still things we can't say in front of our grown sons, private things. Shameful things. And I'm annoyed with the three of them for bringing ugliness into Aruba on a Sabbath. The Sabbath is supposed to be a foretaste of paradise. Especially now.

Peter lightly punches Michael on the arm. "*You*," he says. "I was maybe twelve. I think it was the January before my bar mitzvah. You, Mike, the big brother who knew everything, telling me—the little twerp—it was all my fault, I started it, their fight, they'd never fight if it weren't for me."

"I don't remember that," Michael says. "Well. Not nice. Sorry." Silence.

They're in their late twenties, the difference in age between them now inconsequential. They've each started good careers, they're grown up, they're not going to start punching and wrestling, throwing sand in eyes, cursing one another the way they once did, God forbid. Last summer they went sailing together off the coast of Maine. Friends. For the most part. Now, it's subtle; once in a while one says something that only the other will recognize as a dig.

Natalie gives me a signal with her eyes; I check my watch, open a container, hand her her pills and a glass of water. There's Peter, watching, furious again, squeezing the corner of the bedspread in his fist. I say, "I think we should say a blessing together."

"A *bless*ing?" Peter says. Natalie would say the same, in exactly the same sardonic tone, but she's occupied with trying to keep her medicine down.

I almost rise to the bait and preach: we are to say a blessing for suffering as well as for happiness, having faith that they both come from the same source and that that source is loving, ultimately loving. But I don't, I say something easier. "A blessing that we're here together, a blessing for your lives, Michael, Peter, what a gift you are to us. And also—a blessing that with a little imagination we can make the old family room into Aruba."

But Michael hulks down, brooding. Peter looks through the album of family pictures. What blessing? I should never have mentioned Aruba. So let's call it Martinique, St. John, Jamaica. But it's getting too warm in my tropics. I've got the thermostat jacked up for the sake of my skinny little wife, and with the heat-lamp sun it's maybe too much. It's the Sabbath, I can't switch off the bulb till after sundown, but I can lower the sun behind the tropical plants so it glows through the leaves. Anyway, the day is almost gone. The real sun is down outside, what sun there was, and through the window, past the frozen lawn, the houses across the street are growing dim.

I'm *trying* to keep up my spirits.

My world all of a sudden doesn't seem all that beautiful.

"My three big men," Natalie says. And then she surprises me. It's hard for her to talk. Everything's hard. But she sits up. "Your lives *are* a blessing to us," she says. "Your father's right. And look—forget Aruba. This is our island. It's another blessing."

This takes a big load off my mind. But Natalie using the word *blessing*, even as metaphor?—I don't know what to say. Anyway, we sit for a while, I fix piña coladas for the boys. We drink, we look at pictures, and some of them actually remind us of happy times. It was foolish of me to worry that I was playing creator, implicitly critical of what God had provided. What a joke—we shlepp the same old creatures we are into this new world.

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It's getting dark outside. Can we see three stars in the sky, a sign that the week has begun? Not yet. Only the little lights strung above my beach shack. But soon. Time to get dressed, go up to the kitchen table and mark the end of Sabbath, the beginning of ordinary time. "Boys," I say, "you want to make a sling out of your hands, carry your mother upstairs? Remember how you did that when you were teenagers? I'm afraid it's even easier now."

"Max, this was very sweet," she says.

They carry her, perfect teamwork, upstairs. Words from somewhere in the Bible come to me, *How good and how pleasant when brothers dwell together—like fine oil on the head running down onto the beard*. Peter is singing some pop song from ten years back, and Michael joins in.

I'm lumbering up the stairs behind the music. I'm glad to let them do the carrying tonight. Natalie smiles down at me, an arm around Peter, around Michael. And that's when I get it, the nature of the gift. Oh, I think, the real gift—not mine to her of Aruba, but hers to me. For her to accept my island *as* a gift—today, when she's bedraggled, nauseated, angry; when breathing comes hard, when smiling comes hard, that's the gift. This is how God speaks to us.

Is IT enough? I'm filled with love for her, but the lawyer in me wants another look at that contract. The blessing and the curse. "I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse." My ancestor who heard Moses explain the contractual obligations, explain the penalty clause—even with all the faith in the world, he must have been bewildered. Maybe, he thought, Moses himself can't put it into words, the way it works. The blessing—we enact. The curse—that, too. And then . . . there's cancer.

Maybe, if Moses were here, he could explain.

At the top of the stairs Natalie snaps, "Enough! I'm not totally helpless yet! That's next week." She's trying to get them to laugh at her tough-guy voice. They don't laugh, but they set her down. Michael on one side, Peter on the other, they help her to the kitchen, where I've got an easy chair set up at the table. A queen's throne, but so big around her it's like Alice in the queen's chair, or as if the queen had shrunk into Alice.

She sits up, arms folded. "Peter, please, I'll make a deal with you. You stop looking at me like that and I'll buy you a beautiful silk shirt for your birthday."

My boys look at each other. Michael sits beside her and squeezes her arm.

"And Michael, you, too. Cut that out. Stop evaluating my muscle tone."

"I'll start dinner," I say, "right after we make *havdalah*." I get yarmulkes and the little prayer books we've always used. Silver spice box for scent, kiddush cup for wine, colored candles twisted into a single candle for fire: we praise the gift of the sensuous world, the world that will die.

Soon, I think, as I pour the wine, soon I'll be alone in this house, too big for me the way the easy chair seems outsized for Natalie. Sure. But the gift has been given and the gift has been received, the contract passed on. And these young men will go on, God willing, to be fruitful and multiply, like the stars in the sea and the fish in the sky.

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MUSIC

Beethoven's Message

Terry Teachout

REFERENCE BOOKS usually steer clear of overstatement, but the article on Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) in the second edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* opens with a sentence that would seem fulsome were it not also self-evidently true:

> For the respect his works have commanded of musicians, and the popularity they have enjoyed among wider audiences, he is probably the most admired composer in the history of Western music.

Beethoven's audience is so all-encompassing as to include those whose familiarity with his work is limited at best. Indeed, he is the only classical composer whose name is generally known to people who do not listen to classical music. It is as revealing that the cartoonist Charles Schulz chose Beethoven as the favorite composer of one of the characters in *Peanuts* as it is that Lorin Maazel chose the Ninth Symphony to perform last fall at his inaugural concerts as music director of the New York Philharmonic.

What is striking about this mass popularity, though, is that it has not diminished in the slightest the respect in which Beethoven is held by musicians. A few major composers and performers (among them Benjamin Britten and Vladimir Horowitz) have found him unsympathetic, but most see him as a creator of commanding stature, and his music is performed and recorded regularly, even routinely, throughout the world.* He would appear prominently on any list, however short, of the key figures of Western culture—though that, too, is an understatement. No painter, sculptor, or novelist, not even Michelangelo or Tolstoy (who wrote a novella, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, about one of his compositions) is more widely renowned. Only Shakespeare and the translators of the King James Bible have burrowed as deeply into the collective consciousness of the human race.

THE LIFE and works of such a protean figure must necessarily stand as a crushing rebuke to all egalitarian ideologies, and so it is inevitable that politically oriented musicologists should have sought to explain him away. By shoehorning Beethoven's work into one interpretative paradigm or another, they hope to show that there can be no such thing as a universal masterpiece that commands the respect not merely of specialists but of all men in all conditions. In his new book *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*,† Lewis Lockwood summarizes the ways in which some of these scholars (for whose ideas he himself has no sympathy) have "read" the Ninth Symphony:

> [Theodor] Adorno regarded its optimism as awkward and old-fashioned . . . with great éclat, a feminist critic has denounced the first movement as an example of "horrifyingly violent" masculine rage, and a feminist poet reviled the entire work as a "sexual message" written by a man "in terror of impotence or infertility, not knowing the difference."

TERRY TEACHOUT, COMMENTARY's *regular music critic, is the author of* The Skeptic: A Life of H. L. Mencken, *recently published by HarperCollins.*

* For a selection of important recordings of Beethoven's music, see the discography at the end of this essay.

† Norton, 604 pp., $39.95.

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These reinterpretations have been both facilitated and impeded by the fact that Beethoven's popular appeal, unlike that of Shakespeare, is rooted not merely in the compelling force of his music but in the near-mythic story of his life. That Western music's most admired composer should also have triumphed over seemingly insurmountable personal handicaps—starting with his deafness—is a coincidence that few are prepared to dismiss as altogether coincidental, whatever they may make of it in the end.

Just as important, the facts of Beethoven's life have been copiously documented, making it possible for us to "know" him in a way that we cannot possibly know Shakespeare. We know, for instance, what he looked like—his strong, coarse features are documented not only in literary sources but by a life mask taken in 1812—how he treated his friends and family, what he thought of himself and his contemporaries. Though a sprinkling of apocryphal tales has crept into the history books, the plain truth is startling enough. Perhaps Beethoven did not actually shake his fist at the darkening sky before dying, but he really did dedicate the *Eroica* Symphony to Napoleon, then withdrew the dedication when Napoleon had himself crowned emperor, erasing it from the manuscript so violently as to tear a hole in the title page that is visible to this day. He really did study with Haydn and meet Goethe, who left behind a first-hand impression of the brusque, unclubbable genius whose fame would in time outstrip that of the author of *Faust*: "A more self-contained, energetic, sincere artist I never saw. I can understand very well how singular must be his attitude toward the world."

We know so much about Beethoven the man that it is possible—almost—to lose sight of why he matters so much to us. It is for this reason that *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* is of particular interest. The author, a professor of music at Harvard, is one of the most celebrated Beethoven scholars of his generation. Contrary to present-day musicological fashion, he is primarily concerned with Beethoven's achievements as a composer—though he never commits the reciprocal error of forgetting that the music was written by a human being. And though he makes clear his disdain for ideological interpretations of artistic phenomena, he wastes no time in refuting palpable absurdities. Instead, he criticizes by example, discussing Beethoven's music in transparent, jargon-free language accessible to educated amateurs and supplying just enough biographical and historical background to illuminate without distracting.

Typical of Lockwood's method is his description of the finale of the Fifth Symphony:

> The triumphant tone of this movement spoke to generations of composers after Beethoven as the essence of an optimism that they could associate with Enlightenment ideals, and its way of ending offered a metaphor for the whole work as "a passage from darkness to light," as many have described it. What needs to be seen is that the "light," C major, has been gleaming distantly in the work since the recapitulation of the first movement, and that the finale, flooding the whole work with its C-major emphasis, is the summation of a process that has been unfolding since the first movement.

The result is that rarest of achievements, a profoundly humane work of scholarship that will—or at least should—appeal to specialists and generalists in equal measure. Whether it will make any impression upon the new generation of theory-mongering musicologists remains to be seen, but for any music lover seeking to understand why Beethoven became and remains central to the Western tradition in art, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* is essential reading.

LOCKWOOD'S GREATEST achievement is the bright light—one is tempted to call it a C-major light—he sheds on a question that has preoccupied critics and scholars for the better part of two centuries. To put it as simply as possible: why *is* Beethoven so popular? What is it about his music that speaks to so many so directly?

Many contemporary critics have argued that the appeal of Beethoven's music is to some degree extra-musical, wrapped up as it is in our knowledge of his life and, even more, in the "Beethoven myth" spawned by that knowledge. Long before today's ideologically driven detractors set out to cut him down to size, yesterday's celebrants of Beethoven's universal genius were forcibly enlisting him in the service of their own nonmusical causes. The musicologist Scott Burnham, in reviewing the posthumous reception of Beethoven's work, has noted how it was variously used as "an important bulwark in the burgeoning ideology of German spiritual nationhood," as a symbol for Allied victory over the Axis in World War II, and, more recently, in celebration of the collapse of Communism.* As Burnham writes in his contribution to the *New Grove* article on Beethoven:

> Beethoven's music has served throughout the last two centuries as a kind of potent and free-floating moral force that can be harnessed for any number of political enterprises. . . . His music has fought wars and celebrated victories, consoled and scorned, empowered and overmastered.

Burnham's Beethoven is, in short, a *public* figure, a musical orator whose achievement would seem to have much in common with that of Winston Churchill or Abraham Lincoln—or even Adolf Hitler. At the

* At the great concert celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall, Leonard Bernstein substituted the word "*Freiheit*" (freedom) for "*Freude*" (joy) in the choral finale of the Ninth Symphony.

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same time, however, his status as "cultural hero" (in Burnham's pithy phrase) obviously cannot be separated from our awareness of the difficulties of his personal life. Are we right to read *those* circumstances into the music he composed—to suppose that it can be intelligibly interpreted as a spiritual autobiography?

One of the reasons such questions are so difficult to resolve is that Beethoven is the great transitional figure who stands between classicism and romanticism. The 19th-century romantics esteemed him for introducing emotional subjectivism into music, largely ignoring the extent to which Beethoven (in the famous words of Count Waldstein, his loyal patron) received "the spirit of Mozart from the hands of Haydn." Yet it is no more true to speak of the composer of the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies as a pure classicist. He is something else altogether, not "wholly other" but nonetheless unlike any other composer of his time.

STILL ANOTHER reason for the confusion surrounding Beethoven's musical character stems from the fact that though he was the least intellectual of men, he has always been of singular interest to intellectuals. This is because his music, unlike the less explicitly emotive masterpieces of Mozart, lends itself to such verbal metaphors as "a passage from darkness to light." In addition, Beethoven's private life often relates intelligibly to his work (as Mozart's does not). He is, in short, easy to write about, and intellectuals characteristically prefer art around which they can spin skeins of more or less relevant ideas, rather than engaging directly with the art object itself.

On the other hand, certain kinds of musicians—especially those who live under the aspect of modernity—have been chronically reluctant to speculate about the expressive content of music. Recognizing as they do that music is a nonverbal art form whose meaning is radically ambiguous, they jump to the conclusion that it can "mean" nothing at all—a conclusion which in the case of Beethoven's music can be negated by the simple and immediate experience of listening to it.

Here, it is the literary men who have the advantage over their musical counterparts, especially if they also happen to have some practical knowledge of the materials of music. Much, for example, has been written about the tumultuous first movement of the *Eroica*, but anyone seeking insight into its staggering impact would do well to skip the formal analyses of the musicologists and turn to a 1922 essay by H. L. Mencken, himself an amateur musician:

> There is no sneaking into the foul business by way of a mellifluous and disarming introduction; no preparatory hemming and hawing to cajole the audience and enable the conductor to find his place in the score. Nay! Out of silence comes the angry crash of the tonic triad, and then at once, with no pause, the first statement of the first subject—grim, domineering, harsh, raucous, and yet curiously lovely—with its astounding collision with that electrical C sharp. The carnage has begun early; we are only in the seventh measure. In the thirteenth and fourteenth comes the incomparable roll down the simple scale of E flat—and what follows is all that has ever been said, perhaps all that ever will be said, about music-making in the grand manner.

Whatever the limitations of this jocular "analysis," it does not make the mistake of supposing that the *Eroica* is an abstraction. Mencken understands that Beethoven is putting high emotions into play, and that the piece's effect arises from its ability to make its listeners respond in kind. Nor is this effect a purely Pavlovian chain of stimulus and response. No one can possibly listen to the first movement of the *Eroica* without recognizing that its composer is trying to *tell* us something—that, in other words, he has a message to send.

WHAT, THEN, was Beethoven's message?

Though he left behind a reasonably large body of correspondence and other writings, Beethoven himself was in no way a man of words. Unlike most of the romantic composers who followed him, moreover, he devoted comparatively little time and effort to setting words to music. His songs are the least important part of his output, and though two of his masterpieces, the Ninth Symphony and *Missa solemnis*, employ a chorus and vocal soloists, they are for that reason atypical.

Even in his one significant piece of "program" music, the *Pastoral* Symphony, each movement of which bears a specifically programmatic title, Beethoven went out of his way to warn the listener that the piece as a whole was "more the expression of feeling than tone-painting." One need know nothing about him to understand this piece, or any other that he wrote. For the responsive listener, his music is complete in itself.

None of this is to say that Beethoven's work is unreflective of his personal experience—or, to put it another way, that it is expressively opaque. Hence it is indeed useful, if not essential, to know something of Beethoven's life and times, and such knowledge can serve for many listeners as a handy point of entry into his imaginative world. Despite his emphasis on the purely musical values of Beethoven's work, Lewis Lockwood is at all times open to this kind of biographical explication, as when he writes that "the Plutarchian lesson of resignation" taught by growing deafness "pointed the way to some of his most compelling musical achievements."

No less interesting is Lockwood's response to the postmodern argument that the heroic idealism of

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Beethoven's middle-period works was somehow rendered irrelevant by the horrors committed under the banner of idealism in the 20th century:

> To [this] pessimism there is no final response except that provided by listeners and musicians who seem to arise in every new generation and regard works such as the *Eroica* and the "Emperor" Concerto as among their most significant personal experiences. Listeners accept them not as antiquated expressions of a political idealism that has been cruelly banished by history, but as evocations of the human possibilities that might be realized in a better world. And by attending to the inner as well as the outer aspects of such works, such listeners still believe in the courage and beauty that they convey.

Similarly, in the extended discussion of the Ninth Symphony that is the pivotal chapter of *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, Lockwood begins by pointing out the circularity of Marxist-style "readings" of works of art, noting that "to a convinced ideologue, objections are simply the product of an opposed ideology and cannot possess any special claim to 'truth.'" A better way to interpret the Ninth Symphony, he suggests, is "not only to try to understand the work in the context of its origins but to make that understanding, as nearly as possible and with minimal distortion and loss of content, meaningful in the present."

To this end, and still attending to "the inner as well as the outer aspects" of the work, Lockwood reminds us that in the French Revolution and its aftermath, Beethoven witnessed "the manifest abandonment of Enlightenment ideals by all post-1789 regimes from the 1790's to the 1820's—first the Terror and its adversaries, then Napoleon and his adversaries, then the newly victorious autocratic governments." He then argues that the Ninth Symphony—in particular the setting of Friedrich Schiller's *Ode to Joy* that is its choral finale—was an attempt by Beethoven "to revive a lost idealism." As he goes on to explain:

> It was a strong political statement made at a time when the practical possibilities of realizing Schiller's ideals of universal brotherhood had been virtually extinguished by the post-Napoleonic regimes. . . . By using Schiller's *Ode* to directly address humanity at large, Beethoven conveys the struggle of both the individual and of the millions to work their way through experience from tragedy to idealism and to preserve the image of human brotherhood as a defense against the darkness.

For Lockwood, the Ninth Symphony is thus a "public" statement, and one with clear political implications. Yet it just as clearly reflects Beethoven's most intimately personal experience—the disaster of his deafness, which isolated him from society and convinced him that he could not hope for the solace of romantic love. Unable to overcome that tragedy, he instead used it as a spur, seeking consolation in the making of art. The artist, Beethoven wrote in 1812, strives unendingly for perfection because "he has not yet reached the point to which his better genius only lights the way for him like a distant sun."

This courageous aspiration dictates the shape not only of individual works like the Ninth Symphony, in which tragedy and terror are triumphantly resolved into major-key hope, but of Beethoven's career as a whole, in which he moved from the "heroic" middle-period masterpieces, with their brazen defiance of fate, to the intense inwardness of the late piano sonatas and string quartets. These latter works exist in a world beyond heroism—or, rather, in the state of spiritual tranquility that is the hero's ultimate reward.

LATE IN his own long life, Igor Stravinsky paid this extraordinary tribute to Beethoven's late quartets:

> These quartets are my highest articles of musical belief (which is a longer word for love, whatever else), as indispensable to the ways and meanings of art, as a musician of my era thinks of art and has tried to learn it, as temperature is to life.

It is startling that the giant of modernism who once declared that music "is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to *express* anything at all" should have written so passionately about the greatest works of a composer whose music is so palpably expressive of the deepest human concerns. But, then, Stravinsky's best music, whatever he may have thought or wrote about it, is in fact as expressive of those same concerns as is Beethoven's. The composer of *Symphony of Psalms* and the composer of the Ninth Symphony were in some fundamental sense speaking the same language.

This spiritual continuity—this unswerving faith in the universal power of beauty to relieve and transcend the earthly woes of mankind—is Beethoven's message. Small wonder that its unabashed idealism should make postmodernists so uncomfortable. Disbelieving as they do in the possibility of truth and beauty, they have no choice but to seek to explain away a universal masterpiece like the Ninth Symphony, whose very existence definitively refutes the nihilism that informs their view of the world.

The abolition of the Ninth Symphony is, to say the least, an ambitious critical project, and one may doubt that it will be completed any time soon. As Scott Burnham writes, "Perhaps when that happens, the Western world will truly have passed into another age." But until that nightmare should come to pass, it seems far more likely that Beethoven will remain, as the *New Grove* still proclaims him to be, the most admired composer in the history of Western music—past, present, and future.

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Beethoven on CD: A Select Discography

Most of the great conductors and instrumentalists of the 20th century left behind memorable recordings of Beethoven's music, and the finest young artists of the 21st century seem more than likely to follow suit. Here are ten noteworthy examples:

1933-35: Artur Schnabel was the first pianist to record the complete Beethoven piano sonatas and concertos, and these performances, for all their surface imperfections, remain an interpretative touchstone. Schnabel's recordings of the seven "named" sonatas—the *Pathétique*, *Moonlight*, *Pastoral*, *Waldstein*, *Appassionata*, *Les Adieux*, and *Hammerklavier*—have recently been collected in a two-disc set. The transfers from issued 78's are of exceptionally high quality (Pearl GEMS 0004, two CD's).

1932-41: Technical standards in string playing have soared since the 30's, but the Busch String Quartet's 78-era performances of the five late quartets, much like Schnabel's sonata recordings, remain memorable for their combination of unsentimental directness and frank expressivity. They have been reissued in a single set together with a similarly fine string-orchestra performance of the *Grosse Fuge* by the Busch Chamber Players (Pearl GEMS 0053, three CD's).

1936: Beethoven figured more prominently in Arturo Toscanini's working repertoire than any other composer, and Toscanini's recording with the New York Philharmonic of the Seventh Symphony is a near-definitive interpretation. No other performance of this "apotheosis of the dance" (as Richard Wagner called it) has such irresistible forward momentum, and none is so virtuosically played. This legendary recording, currently out of print in the U.S., is scheduled for future release by Naxos as part of a complete Toscanini-New York Philharmonic series. It is already available in England and can be ordered online from www.amazon.co.uk (Naxos Historical 8.110840).

1940: Rarely has one great composer recorded the work of another, but Béla Bartók can be heard in a live performance of the *Kreutzer* Sonata recorded in 1940 at the Library of Congress that shows off his remarkable pianism—at once romantically flexible and unmistakably modern in its intensity. He is partnered by Joseph Szigeti, the most idiosyncratic and individual of violin virtuosos (Hungaroton HCD 12330).

1951: Wilhelm Furtwängler reopened the Bayreuth Festival after World War II with a performance of the Ninth Symphony that is a prime example of his highly personal interpretative style. The contrast between Furtwängler's introspective, sometimes wayward conducting and Toscanini's lean, linear approach is illuminating (EMI Classics 66953).

1958: Primarily known for his playing of Bach, the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould, accompanied by Vladimir Golschmann and an orchestra of New York studio musicians, performed the First Piano Concerto with a clarity and incisiveness that were unmistakably Bach-like in spirit. This exhilarating performance is currently available as part of a three-disc set containing Gould's versions of all five Beethoven piano concertos (Sony Classical SM3K 52632, three CD's).

1960: Like Gould, Bartók, and Szigeti, the pianist Sviatoslav Richter performed Beethoven in a style noticeably different from that of the Austro-German tradition, and his Russian "accent" can be heard in a performance of the *Appassionata* Sonata, currently available as part of a two-disc set also containing Richter's recordings of five other Beethoven sonatas (Philips 456 949-2PM2, two CD's).

1962: Otto Klemperer was widely thought to be the most important Beethoven conductor of the postwar era, and his distinctive style—blunt, unadorned, and at times almost shockingly straightforward—can be heard in the studio recording of Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*, that he made with the Philharmonia Orchestra and an all-star cast headed by the Canadian tenor Jon Vickers (EMI Classics 67361, two CD's).

1965-70: The violinist Isaac Stern, the cellist Leonard Rose, and the pianist Eugene Istomin, three American virtuosi who also performed together as a trio in the 60's and 70's, recorded all of Beethoven's piano trios during their peak years as an ensemble. There is no finer recorded example of the postwar "international" style of classical interpretation (Sony Classical SM4K 46738, four CD's).

1998: Many prodigies have played the Beethoven Violin Concerto—Yehudi Menuhin first performed it with Fritz Busch and the New York Symphony when he was just eleven years old—but it is hard to imagine a violinist of any age interpreting it as well as the American violinist Hilary Hahn. Her sensitive, unaffected playing can be heard on the recording she made at the age of eighteen, beautifully accompanied by David Zinman and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (Sony Classical SK 60584).

Except as indicated, these CD's can all be purchased online by viewing this article during the month of February on Commentary's website: www.commentarymagazine.com

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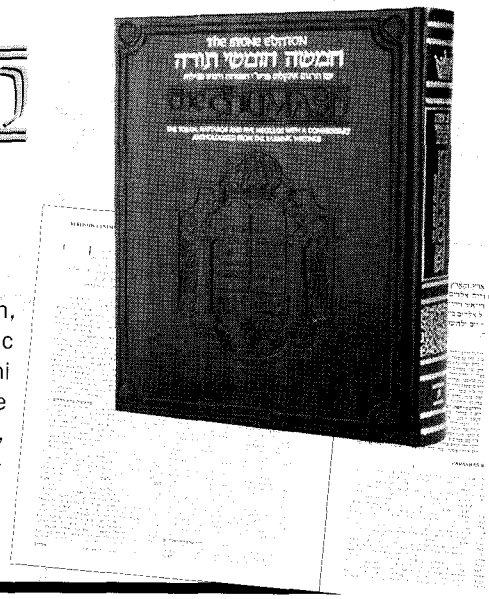

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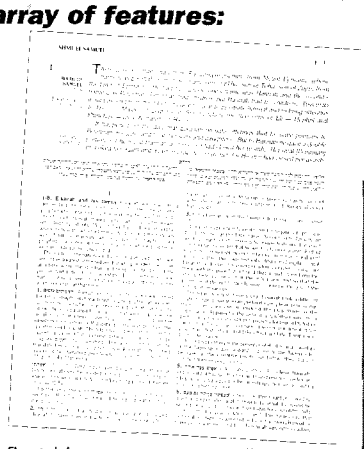

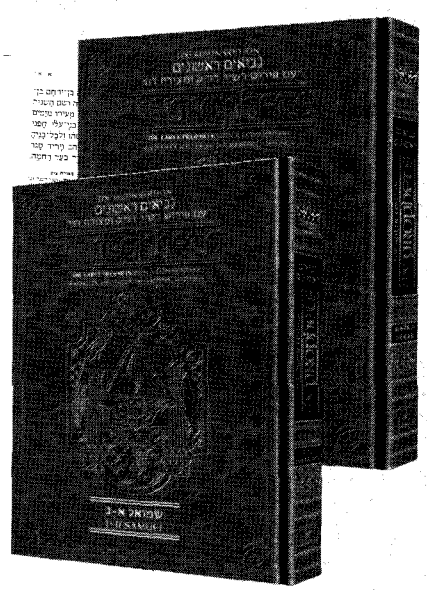

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Books in Review

Lone Star

Made in Texas:
George W. Bush and the
Southern Takeover of
American Politics
by Michael Lind
Basic. 201 pp. $24.00

Reviewed by
Gary Rosen

GOOD REPUBLICAN soldier that he is, Trent Lott finally fell on his sword, but the Lott affair itself will not be dispatched so neatly. In the course of a few short weeks in December, the then-majority leader of the Senate managed to suggest that his party was both sympathetic to the Jim-Crow South of 1948 *and* deeply mistaken in its resistance to affirmative action, a policy that the Mississippian, interviewed in full contrition mode, now declared himself to support "across the board." How much this episode will damage the political and moral standing of the GOP remains to be seen, but one thing is certain: it has presented a windfall to Michael Lind, whose new book, a polemic against "the Southern takeover of American politics," could not have been more perfectly timed.

Many of Lind's arguments in *Made in Texas* will be familiar to those who have followed his career since his loudly self-trumpeted break from the world of conservative opinion journalism in the mid-1990's. Like not a few very prolific writers, Lind has begun to repeat himself. One finds elements here of his elaborate paradigm of U.S. history in *The Next American Nation* (1995), of his conspiracy-minded indictment of the corporate elite and the "overclass" in *Up from Conservatism* (1996), of the policy nostrums that he (and his coauthor Ted Halstead) hawked in *The Radical Center* (2001), and of the loathing for the religious Right and the South that has imbued so much of his work.

What saves this slender volume from being an entirely recycled product is his new take on these well-worn themes. As Lind now sees it, getting to the root of today's most pernicious political and economic developments, especially as they relate to George W. Bush, demands a fuller understanding of the role played in the nation's recent history by our most outsized and myth-enshrouded state. We must, he insists, delve deep into the dark heart of Texas.

A NATIVE Texan himself, Lind is eager to disabuse readers of the image of the Lone Star State they are likely to have absorbed from popular lore and Hollywood. The great geographic bulk of Texas may lie in the Great Plains and the Southwest, but the state's wealth, power, and population have always been concentrated in its eastern reaches, "the green, well-watered, humid, wooded, and flat area to the east of Austin and the north of Houston and Galveston." It is in this less familiar quarter of the state, Lind believes, that one discovers its true historical identity. Concealed beneath the costume of the tough, taciturn cowboy is, he writes, "a white-suited Southern planter. Texas is a Southern state masquerading as a Western state."

GARY ROSEN *is the managing editor of* COMMENTARY.

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As Lind reminds us, Texas played a key role in the Confederacy and, with the end of Reconstruction in the 1870's, adopted a racist regime every bit as brutal and implacable as that of the Deep South. Nor were newly freed blacks the first minority to feel the wrath of the state's dominant "tribe." The Anglo-Celtic Protestants who settled Texas (and much of the rest of the South) could point to a long tradition of "conquering and expropriating other ethnic nations," from the native Irish Catholics of far-away Ulster to the Indians and Mexicans of the New World. From this bloody history of domination emerged, Lind writes, "a people as militaristic as the ancient Spartans," a fact evident even now, he suggests, in the Southern drawl with which the American soldier so often speaks.

With the withdrawal of Union troops after Reconstruction, political power returned, in Lind's telling, to the region's oligarchic establishment, a small class of landowners who, in connivance with investors from more enlightened parts of the country, wished to see Texas and the South as a whole remain a commodity-producing economic backwater. As Lind says of these plantation-style arrangements, "the terms that were negotiated . . . were unfavorable to the Southern white and black majority, but very favorable to the Southern rich, who were given a free hand by the Northeastern elite in crushing dissent within their region, in return for becoming a reliable supplier of cotton, cattle, and (later on) oil and gas." For the better part of the next century, the South stagnated while the rest of the U.S. industrialized, thanks largely to the gentry's success in keeping unions out, taxes low, and investment in infrastructure and public services to a bare minimum.

What finally brought down this edifice of racial and class oppression, Lind contends, was federal intervention, a development personified in his account by Lyndon B. Johnson, the outstanding representative of the dissenting "modernist" tradition in Texas. An enthusiastic supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, the young Johnson understood the transformative power of what Lind calls "state capitalism." Only through massive public investment in projects like rural electrification and, during World War II, the manufacture of military wares was the South brought into the industrial age. Later, as President, Johnson would extend this revolution to the realm of race, reclaiming after almost a century the national government's role as the guarantor of the civil rights of blacks.

Made in Texas leaves no doubt that Lind has done his homework on the history of the post-Civil War South. There are, to be sure, problems with his account. His speculations about the ethno-cultural origins of Southern behavior are often crude, and he is too eager to see a conspiracy, rather than simple shared interests, in the partnership between Southern economic elites and their Wall Street backers. As for the eventual modernization of the South, the federal wage and labor legislation of the New Deal probably had more to do with it than the grand projects of "state capitalism" touted by Lind. But saying as much would take the rhetorical steam from Lind's own policy agenda, the centerpiece of which is a loopy scheme to repopulate the Great Plains by having the federal government provide the region with broadband Internet connections, high-tech "research bases," and an "interstate skyway system" of small airports.

Still, none of these flaws is fatal to Lind's account, and the broad outline of what he calls the "Confederate century" rings true. Where he fails, and in doing so makes himself look like the most marginal sort of ideological crank, is in his effort to relate this history to present-day politics. Lind focuses on Texas not just to set the record straight about his home state's often ugly past but to use that past as a cudgel, directed with tendentious, ad-hominem fury at George W. Bush.

Thus, despite the obvious ways in which Bush is hardly a perfect embodiment of Deep-South Texas—his family's well-known Northeastern provenance, his personal roots in the state's western sector, his education at institutions like Andover, Yale, and Harvard—Lind devotes page after page to the President's one concrete link to that corner of the state: his ranch in Crawford, eighteen miles from Waco. In picking a retreat so close to Waco, Lind informs us, Bush chose to associate himself with a city that was once "one of the centers of lynching in the United States" and "one of the national bases of the Ku Klux Klan," a place where the Menckenesque satirist W.C. Brann was shot in the back in 1898 for ridiculing "Baptist hypocrisy," where "local ayatollahs" burned "diabolical LP's and books" in the 1970's, and where, in 1993, "David Koresh and his cult" suffered their "apocalyptic immolation."

Nor is Bush just guilty of occasionally residing in so questionable a vicinity. The more serious problem, to Lind's mind, is that the President has absorbed wholesale the entire Deep-South-inspired "folk culture" of Texas, a set of attitudes and sentiments that supplies the key to understanding his policies.

Take, for instance, the Bush administration's much-noted skepticism with respect to international treaties and organizations. Here, Lind insists, one must look past the obvious. Though there were valid reasons for the U.S. to object to the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, the International Criminal Court, and participation in UN peacekeeping missions, the real dynamic behind the administration's foreign policy lay elsewhere: in the combination of a President who is a

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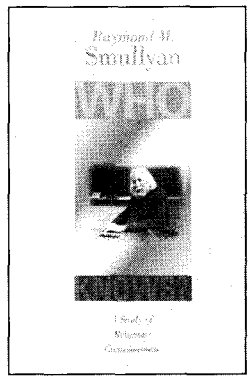

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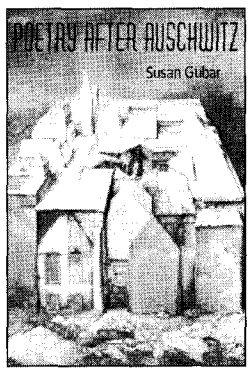

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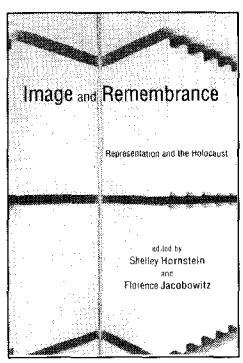

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"macho, swaggering, Southern, born-again Protestant" and the "apocalyptic ideology" of his fundamentalist supporters, who believe "that the United Nations, the European Union, or some other international organization or multinational bloc is under the control of Satan."

Similar considerations apply to understanding the President's strong affinity for the state of Israel and his administration's aggressive demeanor since September 11. As Lind observes,

> Like present-day Israel, Texas before the civil-rights revolution was a *Herrenvolk* (master-race) democracy, combining populism within the majority ethnic nation with the state-enforced subordination of ethnic minorities. It is no coincidence that the products of two similar *Herrenvolk* societies, George W. Bush and Ariel Sharon, appear to be most themselves when waging war on behalf of their tribes or relaxing on their ranches.

Lest Lind be misunderstood, blood and soil are not the only factors that, in his view, have driven Bush forward in his response to Arab radicalism. There is also the prospect, irresistible for a commodity-minded Texan President, of "an American takeover of the Iraqi and Saudi oil fields" and of "installing pro-American puppet regimes" throughout the Middle East.

As it turns out, even in his general support for policies like free trade and open immigration—policies endorsed by many liberals and Democrats—Bush is guided by the archaic, pre-modern demands of "Southernomics." As Lind sees it, thanks to agreements like NAFTA, the U.S. now follows "what was once the foreign economic strategy of the Confederate States of America," exporting raw materials and importing manufactured goods. Nor is it so puzzling that Bush, the leader of "the party of Jefferson Davis," would welcome immigrants. As Lind writes, "if slavery is not permitted, then employing foreign workers without civil rights—'coolies'—is the second best solution."

THAT MICHAEL Lind cannot see beyond the limits of his own fevered theories does not mean that he is wrong to raise questions about the role of the South in the modern Republican party. As the Lott affair made so embarrassingly clear, the GOP has for too long failed to confront its winking acceptance of the South's racist remnant. The President undoubtedly spoke in good faith when he declared in December that there is no room in our national politics for segregationist nostalgia—but that principle, if followed in the 2000 campaign, would have kept him from appearing at Bob Jones University with its notorious ban on interracial dating, or from giving a pass to partisans of the Confederate flag.

With the troubling legacy of the GOP's "Southern strategy" so much in the news of late, one of the most striking things about *Made in Texas* is Lind's reticence with respect to the various controversies over race, from school busing to welfare reform, that have roiled American politics in recent decades. Though he notes the Bob Jones University episode and Bush's difficulty in winning minority votes, he seems to be of the opinion that, even among Southern Republicans, the civil-rights revolution was real. Whatever else may be objectionably Southern about the GOP in Lind's eyes, he does not suggest, as many commentators have done in recent weeks, that the party's policies are themselves tainted by racism.

Indeed, after trudging through so many venom-filled pages aimed at George W. Bush and the GOP, I was surprised and pleased to find near the end of the book a passing attack on a certain "liberal orthodoxy"—the one that "views Americans as divided permanently into five quasi-official races . . . and favors racial discrimination against white Americans in favor of nonwhite Americans in college admissions, hiring, and political redistricting." Trent Lott and other Republicans may no longer be able to see the principle at stake in opposing affirmative action, but Michael Lind does. In this, if in little else, they stand to learn something from their clever, angry, history-besotted foe.

Border Crossings

Cultures of the Jews:
A New History
Edited by David Biale
Schocken. 1,196 pp. $45.00

Reviewed by
David G. Roskies

RELATIVELY SPEAKING, Jews are johnnies-come-lately to the writing of history. What need was there for it in the ancient or medieval world, if everything a Jew needed to know about the past, present, and future was already inscribed in the Hebrew Bible with its surrounding commentaries, and almost everything a Jew was ever likely to do had been prescribed in the legal debates of the rabbis as recorded in the Babylonian Talmud and *its* commentaries? When, however, beginning in the late Renaissance and early modern age, Jews began to renegotiate their place in the Western world, first as citizens and then, later, as a nation among the nations, many of them found the study of the past to be a powerful lens through which to reimagine their own present and future.

For American Jews, a number of by-now standard works have served this task of reimagining. Louis Finkelstein's two-volume compen-

DAVID G. ROSKIES *teaches literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He has recently completed* The Last Yiddish Novel: A Memoir.

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dium, *The Jews, Their History, Culture, and Religion*, first published in 1949, provided a compelling master narrative. In this work, the Jews were portrayed as a sober, God-fearing people who had contributed mightily to the world's arts, sciences, medicine, music, ethics, and philosophy, not to speak of the unbroken chain of Hebrew literary achievement; the reigning theme was that the well-being of humanity at large was inextricably intertwined with the destiny and the unique culture of the people Israel. (A roughly similar purpose informed a very valuable one-volume work from the same period, *Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People*, edited by Leo W. Schwarz and published in 1956.)

Given the date of its release, Finkelstein's work was necessarily incomplete. A number of decades later, the Israeli scholar Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson provided English readers with a complementary volume, *A History of the Jewish People*. This collaborative effort by scholars at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem told a story shaped by the impulses of Jewish nationalism—a story that moved from the Israelite conquest of Canaan in the distant past to the centuries-long tragedy of exile to the triumphant homecoming that culminated in the establishment of the state of Israel in the mid-20th century.

Now we have *Cultures of the Jews*, a huge and richly illustrated volume that is the product of 23 scholars in the United States and Israel working under the guidance of David Biale, a professor of Jewish history at the University of California. The book is divided into three major parts, labeled, respectively, "Mediterranean Origins," "Diversities of Diaspora," and "Modern Encounters." The deliberate use of the plural—Origins, Diversities, Encounters, not to mention the "Cultures" of the title—provides a clue to the book's purposes. These are further spelled out by Biale in his preface, "Toward a Cultural History of the Jews," an updated version of a manifesto first published in 1994 in the journal *Jewish Social Studies*.

In that manifesto, Biale decried the "hegemonic discourse" that allegedly dominated the historical study of the Jews and was responsible for the notion of a unified, normative entity termed "Judaism." It was, Biale argued, incumbent upon the new generation to expose the authoritarian bias behind this falsely monolithic concept, and to replace it with an inclusive and frankly pluralistic view. A more appropriate object of study than "Judaism" was Jewish culture, or rather the multiplicity of Jewish cultures, with "culture" understood to signify not just the products of high intellect but Jewish folkways and mores and the

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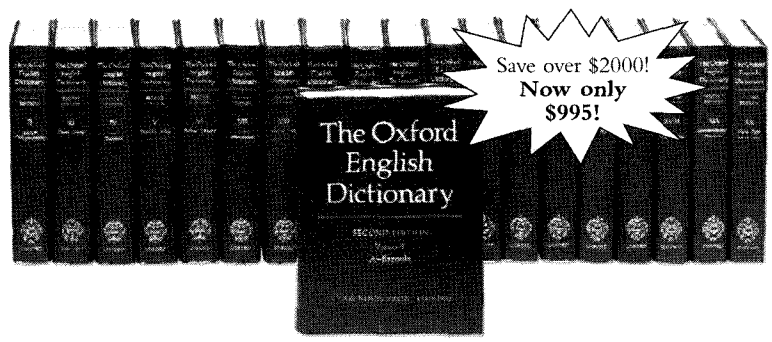

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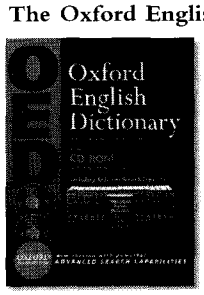

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record of everyday life, as well as—and this was crucial—the story of Jewish interaction with the "Other" (that is, non-Jews). The People of the Book, Biale wrote, were just as surely a People of the Body, and it was time to give the body its due.

As even this brief summary suggests, Biale's program was of a piece with the worldwide academic trend to unseat traditional modes of scrutinizing the past—including the disciplines of intellectual, economic, political, and military history—in favor of an approach emphasizing the quotidian, the forgotten, the native, and the downtrodden. The New Historians, who now dominate most university history departments, would focus on the slow and enduring processes of ordinary life: childhood, initiation rites, bereavement practices, healing rituals, and the like. In their books, as in classrooms devoted to a new discipline known as cultural studies, culture is defined not by what great minds have thought, great artists have wrought, and great generals have fought, but by what ordinary people do.

In *Cultures of the Jews*, Biale does more than adapt this essentially populist ideology to the study of Jewish history. He is also deep into another bit of current academic wisdom, namely, the "construction of identity"—in particular as it relates to the idea of the "Other." Here his purpose is to question, if not to undermine, the idea that Jewish identity is a function of uniquely Jewish ideas and forms of behavior. In both form and substance, he maintains, Jewish identity is rather to be seen primarily as a function of the constant and intimate involvement of Jews with cultures different from their own. "It was," Biale writes, "precisely in their profound engagement with the cultures of their environment that the Jews constructed their distinctive identities." This, in a nutshell, is *his* master narrative.

MOST OF the individual essays in *Cultures of the Jews* faithfully endeavor to carry out the terms of Biale's program. A typical chapter begins with a framing device: a story, or a text, or a reproduction of a visual artifact that is intended to illustrate the historic permeability of the boundaries between Jews and non-Jews (such "boundaries" and boundary-crossings being another fixed element of cultural-studies jargon). Some of these framing devices are quite ingenious. Thus, Ronald S. Hendel opens his chapter on biblical Israel by citing the episode of Balaam—the foreign seer who, in the book of Numbers, is called upon by the king of Moab to curse the Israelites but ends up blessing them instead as a people dwelling apart, not counting itself among the nations. Examining the archeological evidence, Hendel argues that the bumbling figure presented to us in the Bible is not only a late and artificial "construct"—an actual prophetic figure named Balaam appears in a number of early West Semitic inscriptions—but an ambiguous one, a figure whose praise of Israel's apartness discloses moral misgivings within that ancient community's sense of its own identity.

Similarly "constructed," according to Eric M. Meyers, is the identity of "rabbinic Judaism"—the quotation marks, which are his, are meant to denote a manufactured concept. This construct emerged (according to Meyers) not in conformity with internal Jewish drives but out of a fierce dialogue with Greco-Roman culture. Everything associated with the talmudic rabbis—from actual institutions like the academic conclave in the town of Yavneh to certain paradigmatic ideas like martyrdom—is explained by Meyers in reference to the Jewish interaction with Hellenism; only Hellenism itself, the quintessential "Other," is presented to us as something incontrovertibly real and self-contained.

And so it goes. Reaching the chapter on ancient Babylonia, where we might expect to be greeted with a facsimile of a talmudic folio—the Babylonian Talmud being the central repository of Jewish culture for all time to come—we are instead offered two reproductions of "incantation bowls" covered with Aramaic writing that, we are informed, were "possibly intended [by their Jewish creators] to heal non-Jews" by means of magical divination. And just as the presence of pagan superstition among the Jews is said to reveal the boundary-busting impact of Zoroastrianism upon the Babylonian sages, so, in chapter after succeeding chapter of this book—"Children and Magic," "The Cultural Tapestry of the Jews of North Africa," "Religious Interplay on an African Stage" (about the arcane practices of Ethiopian Jews), "Jewish Cultures in Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Bukhara," and so forth—we see the old "hegemonic" idea that there is something consistently and identifiably "Jewish" about the Jews overshadowed by the giddy spectacle of plural influences, by syncretism and folk practices and magic, until both the Jewish body and the Jewish soul stand before us draped in foreign garments and adorned with amulets galore.

IN FAIRNESS, it must be said that some periods in Jewish history do seem to lend themselves a little more readily than others to the multicultural approach. Take, conspicuously, the Jewish courtiers, physicians, poets, and philosophers who flourished from the 7th to the 16th century on the Iberian peninsula. This Jewish coterie, imbued with Arabic high culture, alert to the competing messianic claims of Christianity, versed in Romance languages, and in contact with Franco-German (Ashkenazi) Jewry, has been well served in two chapters by my academic colleagues Raymond Scheindlin and Benjamin Gampel—neither of whom, however, is an adherent of Biale's anti-"hegemonic" ideology. (Gampel further breaks the mold by providing the only useful

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map in the whole volume.) There is also the gallery of Jewish bankers, astrologers, gamblers, printers, prostitutes, and the occasional documented homosexual who thrived in Renaissance Italy and who form the subjects of a freewheeling chapter by Elliot Horowitz.

But for most other periods and phenomena, Biale's editorial template proves next to useless. It is of no help, for example, in tracing the emergence of Ashkenazi pietism in the midst of Crusades and expulsions, or the proliferation of yeshivot throughout the Polish realm. The case of Poland, indeed, elicits the book's most cautious treatment of "border-crossing" between Jews and the "Other"; in this chapter, Moshe Rosman is forced to conclude that "Jewish and Polish cultural creativity had different sources of inspiration and parallel lines of development," though he mitigates the bad news by assuring us that when it came to demons, amulets, oath formulas, mystical names, and dreams, there was no country more hospitable than medieval Poland.

There is a deeper problem here. Although Biale would no doubt deny the charge, implicit in his historical trajectory, with its celebration of "hybridity" and "boundary crossing" and its lavishing of attention on the idiosyncratic, on converts and apostates and outliers of various stripes, is the assumption that historically Jews have had little or nothing to say for *themselves*. Throughout their sojourn on earth, one cannot but conclude, they have been mostly reactive, bouncing off superior cultures and bringing little of their own to the table. To be unkind, one might even say that this volume, with its at times almost parodic aping of the academic fashions of the "Other," offers a particularly dispiriting example of the same alleged syndrome.

The problem with all this is most salient in the final section, covering the period when the Jews emerge en masse as actors in a non-Jewish world

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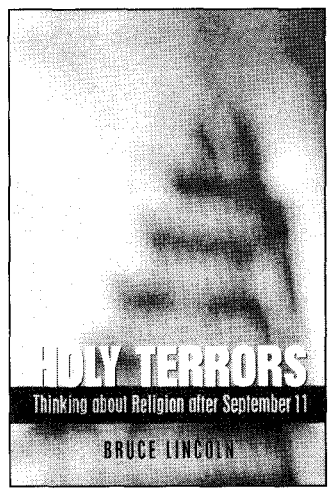

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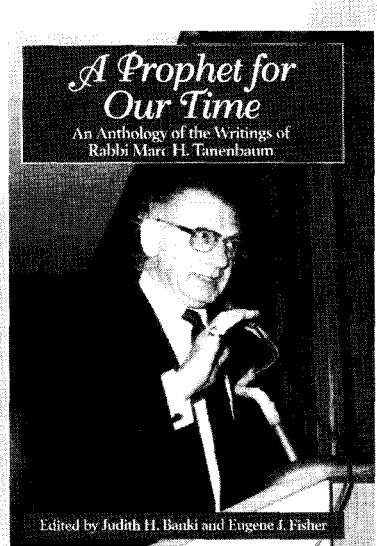

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and undergo their "Modern Encounters." In his own essay on East European Jewry from 1772 until the Holocaust, Biale focuses on an autobiographical passage from the writings of S. Ansky, a Russian nihilist turned Jewish ethnographer and playwright. Ansky, who led a colorful and adventurous life, would seem to make the ideal border-crosser—but, the fact is that, contrary to Biale's reading of his later work, once he returned to his people he set out to expose the pathological self-betrayal involved in every attempt, like his own, to dance "between two worlds."

Worse, while dwelling on the supposed virtues of the borderland, Biale finds little to say about the true and lasting achievements of Polish-Russian Jewry. Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon, the Gaon of Vilna (1720-1797), the greatest talmudist of modern times, is valued by him primarily as an "icon" of a putative shift from private to public within the closed world of Lithuanian Orthodoxy. Solomon Rabinovich (1859-1916), better known by his pen-name Sholem Aleichem and a writer whose universal genius was expressed by means of a highly self-conscious devotion to cultural specifics, rates barely a mention.

Appearing last in the volume, after a quirky and suggestive survey of "Hebrew Culture in Israel" by Ariel Hirschfield, is "American Jewish Culture in the Twentieth Century." Here, Stephen J. Whitfield defines Jewish culture as "whatever Jews . . . have added to art and thought." Under the broadly enveloping wings of this definition he proceeds to celebrate the "crossover dreams" of Irving Berlin, Al Jolson, and the creators of Superman Comics. American Yiddish culture (both high and low) is dismissed in a paragraph or two, synagogues are deemed important insofar as one of them was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, and Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, the performer and song writer who, armed only with a guitar, singlehandedly changed the way that Jews all over the world pray and protest, is denied entry altogether to Whitfield's hall of fame—evidently he crossed a border too far.

BIALE HAS paid a high price for pursuing his revision of Jewish cultural history. Just how high, can be gauged from the one chapter that, flying in the face of political correctness, resoundingly confirms the value of approaching Jewish history the old-fashioned way, by looking closely at great men, great texts, and great ideas. In Raymond Scheindlin's treatment of "Judeo-Arabic Culture in the Golden Age of Islam," we learn that a single individual, Saadiah ben Joseph (882-942), the Gaon of Sura, was responsible for producing the first Hebrew dictionary, the first work of Jewish philosophy, the first authored Jewish book in the modern sense of the word. Saadiah translated the Bible into Arabic, pioneered the genre of Bible commentary, standardized the Jewish liturgy, and made the writing of Hebrew poetry an integral part of the medieval rabbi's job description. Nor was Saadiah a solitary genius. Amid the wine, the women, and the song that Jewish courtiers shared with their Arab counterparts, there emerges from Scheindlin's memorable pages an entire world of great religious personalities who created a Jewish culture notable for its spiritual autonomy and its sublime aspiration. It is with a real thud that one descends from these heights to the listless "boundary crossings" that beguile the imagination of David Biale.

What this "New History" illustrates, in infinite variation and tireless detail, is how the people who have called themselves Jews made their way through the power structures and seductive enticements of many a majority culture. What it utterly fails to explain is what they brought with them, or why, for the most part, they bothered to remain Jews. For that, one must look elsewhere.

Books & Bombs

Feltrinelli
by Carlo Feltrinelli
translated by Alistair McEwan
Harcourt. 344 pp. $30.00

Reviewed by
Mark Falcoff

"A STORY of riches, revolution, and violent death"—so reads the subtitle on the cover of what purports to be a biography of the late Italian publisher and political radical Giangiacomo Feltrinelli. The author is Feltrinelli's son, who was a small boy in 1972 when his father was accidentally killed as he tried to blow up an electrical pylon in an act of sabotage, and this volume is obviously intended as a gesture of filial piety and justification. Instead, it inadvertently pulls aside the curtain on a postwar Italian intellectual culture that, to say the least, does not fare well under scrutiny.

The Feltrinellis had been a wealthy dynasty for several generations before Giangiacomo came along. Starting in timber, they had branched out into the electricity business, banking, and other lucrative enterprises. At all times, they had maintained excellent relations with the government of the day, including Mussolini's—at least until 1935, when Giangiacomo's grandfather was accused of irregularities, probably amounting to nothing more than a failure to bribe the right people, and died of a heart attack before he could be brought to justice.

Giangiacomo was raised in an extremely privileged household in Milan. His parents divorced early, and his mother remarried a young journalist by the name of Luigi Barzini

MARK FALCOFF *is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. His "Watching Christopher Hitchens" appeared last month.*

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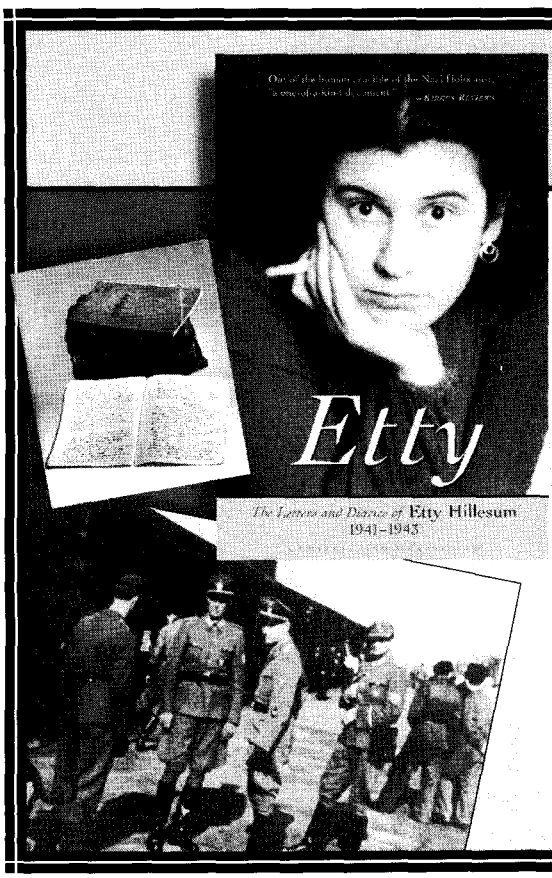
who was to become famous on both sides of the Atlantic. (In this country, Barzini is best known as the author of the 1964 tour de force, *The Italians*.) But neither mother nor stepfather was to the young man's taste. At the earliest opportunity, he escaped to join the partisans in the final days of World War II, making contacts that would serve him well over the next several decades. He entered the Italian Communist party (PCI) through, as the Spanish say, the front door.

Feltrinelli brought to the party not only a proper service record, and not only a distinguished family name, but two other assets. One was his immense wealth, which in the late 1940's and early 1950's helped to finance as much of the party's deficits as Moscow chose not to pick up. The other was his genius for organization. He gave the party and its operatives a firm foothold in the publishing house that he created under the family name in 1954 and that soon blossomed into an empire. He also established and financed a kind of institute for the training of new cadres of Communist intellectuals and activists.

Everything seemed to be moving along swimmingly until a manuscript arrived in his office in the mid-1950's from a relatively unknown Russian writer named Boris Pasternak. It speaks volumes about the leanings of intellectual life in postwar Italy that Feltrinelli was quickly able to find someone who could read Russian and offer an evaluation. No less swiftly, this reader reported that, in *Dr. Zhivago*, Feltrinelli had the makings of an international best-seller. The only problem was that the book had yet to receive approval for publication in the Soviet Union.

As is well known, it never did. Eventually, Feltrinelli decided to go ahead with an Italian edition despite the pleas of Moscow's local cultural agents and their minions that he desist. The book's reception was as anticipated, but the episode led to Feltrinelli's expulsion from the PCI—with the result that in some circles he would be forever branded as a "rightwinger." Even so, his relationship with the party throughout the rest of the 1950's and the first half of the 1960's was far from being merely platonic.

Then came the glorious year of 1968. With the rise of the New Left, Feltrinelli was afforded the opportunity to ride another putative wave of the future, this time with-



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out having to submit to the discipline of a Leninist party. Although somewhat older than most of the young rebels who threw the various centers of Western Europe into an emotional uproar in the ensuing years, he was excellently positioned to assume a sort of leadership role. He also managed to make quite a bit of money from the sudden interest in third-world revolutionary literature, and even undertook repeated pilgrimages to Cuba to try to work with Fidel Castro on the latter's autobiography, a project that came to nothing.

But Feltrinelli's most important involvement during those years was with Italian left-wing formations of a more violent sort, including the Red Brigades (the group that in 1978 would kidnap and murder the former prime minister, Aldo Moro). In this last phase of his life, he adopted the ideology of "direct action" and himself became something of a leftist gangster. It was in connection with these terrorist activities that he planted the bomb that caused his untimely end.

ALTHOUGH THE story of Feltrinelli's life sounds dramatic enough, *Feltrinelli* is actually rather tedious and slow-going. This may be owing in part to Carlo Feltrinelli's unfortunate decision to reproduce his father's letters almost in their entirety. These reveal a man at once neurotic, self-important, self-indulgent, and at times emotionally confused. One's sympathies, however, are inevitably constrained by the knowledge that, even at his worst moments, there was never a lack of luxury in his life, not to mention attractive women, some of them his wives.

Then, too, there is Carlo Feltrinelli's own schematic and conspiratorial view of postwar Italian history, according to which everyone who was not a Communist, fellow-traveler, or New Left militant had to have been some kind of fascist or crypto-fascist. The fact that the country failed to elect a Communist prime minister in the decades immediately after the war had nothing to do (in his judgment) with the preferences of ordinary Italians but was attributable solely to the evil machinations of President Eisenhower's ambassador, Clare Boothe Luce, in league with the CIA and the repressive Italian police. The Marshall Plan is not mentioned once in this book—itself a noteworthy omission in a narrative that unfolds against the backdrop of Italy's economic development after 1946. Nor is anything said, on the other side, about the mafia-like practices of the Italian labor movement, which among other shakedown tactics used to force employers to pay the salaries of union militants who never showed up for work. (They were too busy organizing strikes and attending meetings in Cuba or Algeria.) Not surprisingly, the author's knowledge of U.S. history is shakier still; he seems unaware, for example, of the overwhelming weight of evidence condemning the atomic spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, and his chronologies are consistently wrong.

Carlo Feltrinelli today directs the publishing company and bookstores started by his father, and seems in every respect to be a faithful legatee of his outlook and ideas. But what his book reveals above all is the degree to which the intellectual class to which they have both belonged, once among Europe's most important, has become utterly unserious and irresponsible. Concerning Italian culture generally, it also serves up a banquet of evidence substantiating the charges against it of corruption and bad faith leveled by Oriana Fallaci in her recent *The Rage and the Pride*.* Considering the debt owed by humanity to earlier generations of Italian writers, thinkers, and publishers, this is a tragic comment on a once great civilization.

* See Christopher Caldwell's "The Fallaci Affair" in the October 2002 COMMENTARY.

These Truths

To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders

by Bernard Bailyn

Knopf. 208 pp. $26.00

Reviewed by
Adam Schulman

THE PUBLICATION in 1967 of Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* was a seminal event in American historiography. For the previous half-century, thanks to Charles A. Beard and other more or less Marxist historians, it had been fashionable to understand the thought and writings of the founding era as a byproduct of the social and economic interests of the founders. Bailyn and those who followed him in what came to be called the "ideological school" of historians—including Gordon S. Wood, J.G.A. Pocock, and Garry Wills—made it respectable again to view the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as expressions not of property and privilege but of political principle.

Yet, though eschewing the gross materialism of the Marxists, Bailyn and his colleagues were not quite willing to say that James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and Thomas Jefferson were serious political thinkers in their own right. Bailyn acknowledged that these statesmen had grappled with Locke, Montesquieu, Hume, and the other great figures of the Enlightenment, but for him, the thought of the founders remained an "ideology"—in this case, a set of beliefs, feelings, and values inherited more or less unconsciously from the "civic humanist" tradition of anti-monarchical English radicalism. New political principles had indeed appeared at the time of the country's birth, but

ADAM SCHULMAN *teaches the liberal arts at St. John's College, Annapolis.*

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The UN and Israel

Is the Jewish state getting a fair shake from the world body?

Several years ago, we published one of our clarifying messages under the heading of "The UN and the Middle East." In it, we described how the UN seems to be totally obsessed with Israel. Now, a few years later, it might be time to revisit the topic.

What are the facts?

An outcast: Israel is indeed an outcast in the United Nations and thus, by extension, a pariah in the whole world. Though founded in 1948 – over fifty years ago and at about the same time as many other countries in the wake of World War II – its "legitimacy," its "right to exist," are still being questioned and a topic of constant debate in the UN.

Following the 1967 Six-Day War, the hostility of the United Nations against Israel expanded out of all bounds. Between 1967 and 1988, the UN Security Council passed 88 Resolutions against Israel and the UN General Assembly passed more than 400.

In 1974, Yassir Arafat addressed the General Assembly with a holstered pistol on his hip and received a standing ovation by that body. The hostility against Israel reached its peak in 1975, when the General Assembly passed Resolution 3379 declaring "Zionism as a form of racism." This infamous Resolution remained in effect for sixteen years when, under intense pressure from the United States, it was finally repealed.

What is the reason for the collective hostility of the UN against Israel? All of this hostility is based on the very structure of the United Nations. In the General Assembly, 130 of the 190 members will always, automatically, vote against Israel. The inner circle of this hatred is the core of twenty Arab nations, which initiates the harshest condemnations of Israel. Those countries are part of the larger 56-member Muslim group, which can reliably be counted on automatically to join the Arab block in their anti-Israel Resolutions. And those countries are almost always joined by the "non-aligned" group, which are essentially the underdeveloped countries of the world. They have little interest in Israel, but they are united in their hatred of the United States and consider Israel its surrogate. Each country in the General Assembly counts the same. The vote of the United States counts the same as that of, say, Rwanda or the Ivory Coast.

The greatest outrage is that of the 190 members of the UN, Israel, not being a full member of any of the "regional groups," is the only country that cannot be a member of the Security Council, the most important body of the UN. Syria, deservedly classified as a terrorist state, has just been elected to a 2-year term on that Council. Such outlaw countries as Libya, Iran, North Korea, and even Saddam Hussein's Iraq are eligible for membership. Israel is not.

The most virulent center of anti-Israel activities within the UN. The Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) has classified Israel as the principal human rights violator in the world today. Since its inception, about 25% of its Resolutions have condemned Israel. Such egregious human rights violations as those of China in Tibet, or of Russia in Chechnya don't even come to the floor for discussion. The genocide in Rwanda, the ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, the horrifying "communal strife" in Indonesia's East Timor, the "disappearance" of a few hundred thousand refugees in the Congo, and the ruthless rampage of the Sudanese Muslims against the Christians are not found worthy of the attention of the Human Rights Commission.

> "Instead of condemning and hating Israel, [the underdeveloped countries] should take it as an example of how to build an advanced, prosperous and competent nation."

Such canards as the "blood libel," that Jews use the blood of Muslims and Christians for the baking of their Passover matzos or of the Israelis injecting Arab children with the AIDS virus are earnestly discussed in that forum.

Finally, there is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), established in 1949 to assist the Palestinian "refugees". For more than 50 years, UNRWA has funded and administers the so-called "refugee camps" – hotbeds of murderous anti-Israel activity, including the notorious camp in Jenin, which is the source of most of the suicide bombers who have so far killed over six hundred Israeli civilians and wounded thousands more.

Obviously, the pressure that the Arabs and other Muslim countries are able to exert because of their disproportionate economic power is the main cause of the anti-Israelism (anti-Semitism) of the UN. But most disturbing is the participation and acquiescence in such activity on the part of many of the European nations which, by their actions or inaction, were complicit in the Holocaust. As to the underdeveloped nations of the world, all of which are represented in the General Assembly, one would hope that they would look to Israel as a country from which they could learn and that they would wish to emulate. Virtually all of the countries created after WWII, most of them in Africa, have regressed socially, politically, economically, and in virtually all other respects since freeing themselves from their colonial condition. Millions and millions have died in fratricidal wars. Millions have died of starvation and millions are condemned to die by famine and by AIDS. Instead of condemning and hating Israel, they should take it as an example of how to build an advanced, prosperous and competent nation.

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they were arrived at, Bailyn wrote, "indeliberately, half-knowingly," by men carried along by "the logic of rebellion."

In the decades after his influential book appeared, Bailyn continued to write about the American founding but turned increasingly to other aspects of colonial history, especially the migration of Europeans to America. Now a professor emeritus of history at Harvard, he returns in his latest book, *To Begin the World Anew*, to the words and deeds of the founders, bringing with him, it would seem, some second thoughts about the "ideological" train that he helped to set in motion.

A SLIM volume thickened by the inclusion of over 60 pictures, *To Begin the World Anew* consists of five separate studies, each one seeking to place the men of the revolutionary generation in the context of "the greater world of which they were a part." A chapter on "politics and the creative imagination" tries to explain why such a profusion of new political ideas appeared in the American colonies at the end of the 18th century. To Bailyn's mind, the explanation lies not in the vaunted philosophical education of the founders but (to the contrary) in their "provincialism"—their marginal existence at the edge of civilization, their simple and rustic habits, their remoteness from the corruption and cynicism of Europe, their detachment and freedom from the "over-refined, over-elaborated, dogmatic metropolitan formulas in political thought."

In another essay, Bailyn focuses on Jefferson's apparently incongruous combination of "soaring idealism" and "hard-headed pragmatism." We learn of the Virginian's inconsistent record on issues of federalism and states' rights; his initial distrust of the Constitution, followed, in the end, by enthusiastic support; his zeal in behalf of equality together with his hopes for a "natural aristocracy"; and, most famously, his hatred of slavery in principle but his embrace of it in practice. Though hardly soft on Jefferson, Bailyn suggests that these inconsistencies are chargeable not to simple hypocrisy but to Jefferson's exploration of the "ambiguities of freedom," of the sometimes impossible task of reconciling political principle and practice.

A similar opposition is the theme of Bailyn's examination of the Revolution-era diplomacy of Benjamin Franklin. As Bailyn recognizes, Franklin's effectiveness in dealing with the European powers can be attributed as much to his hard-nosed, even Machiavellian, cynicism as to his ardent devotion to the cause of progress and equality. Bailyn is unsure whether Franklin was torn by these conflicting impulses or instead consciously blended them as the situation demanded, but he finds in Franklin's statecraft a distinctively American set of virtues. As he asks, rhetorically, "is it not true that America's successes, its great historical moments, have occurred when idealism and realism were combined?" In this context, he points in particular to the "creative tension" between the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, "the one creating the powers necessary for survival, the other expressing enlightened aspirations."

Turning to the *Federalist*, the classic defense of the Constitution, Bailyn at first seems intent on minimizing its significance. Its 85 essays, he writes, were not meant to form "a formal treatise on the foundations of government or to create a new science of politics." They were polemics, written by Hamilton, Madison, and John Jay "in the heat of a fierce political battle." Not only were the three authors not always of one mind, but the papers were mostly produced in great haste, in conditions unfavorable to calm contemplation. On the whole, Bailyn observes, there was "something helter-skelter about the whole enterprise," and he seems amused that generations of historians and constitutional scholars have subjected every phrase of the *Federalist* to such close scrutiny.

Yet, when Bailyn describes some of the central arguments of the *Federalist*—on majority tyranny, the problem of faction, executive power, federalism, the separation of powers—he acknowledges that "pragmatically, unsystematically, almost inadvertently," its authors "drew fundamental principles into the popular debate." Even today the essays of the *Federalist* remain "acutely relevant," he writes, because they "address masterfully our permanent concerns with power."

In a final chapter, Bailyn discusses the influence that American political ideas exerted on both sides of the Atlantic in the early years of the republic. As he explains, not only did the American Revolution create a sense that a new era of liberty and equality was at hand, but specific provisions of the U.S. Constitution served as models for reform in numerous countries, from Switzerland and Germany to Argentina and Venezuela. The American example, in short, reached far beyond America.

IT WOULD be a mistake to see *To Begin the World Anew* as a radical break from the creed of the "ideological" school. Bailyn remains convinced, by and large, that the founders were creatures of their circumstances and of the underlying conditions of their day. He tends to treat the giants of Enlightenment thought not as thinkers with whom the founders were fully engaged, but rather as Old World authority figures whose influence had to be overcome before the American experiment, in all its historical peculiarity, could be launched in earnest.

Still, one also detects a definite openness to the possibility that the founders were more than that. In his observations about the interplay of idealism and realism—whether in the thought of Jefferson and Franklin or in the relationship between the Declaration of Indepen-

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dence and the Constitution—Bailyn suggests that they understood, as few others have, the abiding limits of strict rationality in politics.

More impressively, Bailyn emphasizes that however "provincial" the origin of the ideas of the American founding—and the Constitution that embodies those ideas—they have proved to be of permanent value. As he writes on the book's final page, "American constitutionalism . . . has become a classic formulation for the world at large of effectiveness and constraint in the humane uses of power." Though Bailyn himself is not so explicit, one might conclude that after all these years he has come to recognize that American "ideology" may contain no small measure of simple political truth.

Counting the Cost

Risk and Reason:
Safety, Law, and the Environment
by Cass R. Sunstein
Cambridge. 342 pp. $30.00

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

The modern environmental movement, which came of age in the 1960's, has been dominated by activists and alarmists, and their basic method has never changed: overstate threats and downplay the costs and difficulties of dealing with them. Whatever the issue—air pollution, contaminated water, genetically altered food, asbestos, toxic waste, greenhouse gases, endangered species, you name it—they have tended to offer the same answer: heavy doses of regulation.

Cass R. Sunstein is at once sympathetic to these activists and critical of their naiveté. He believes that a more rational approach to managing environmental risks would give us many more benefits, mainly in the form of better health, at substantially lower cost. His mission in *Risk and Reason* is to tell us how this might be done.

Sunstein is obviously a smart guy. On the faculty at both the law school and the political-science department of the University of Chicago, he has testified before Congress on many different issues, consulted on constitution-making and legal reform in Russia, China, and South Africa, and written books on regulation, free speech, and how juries decide punitive damages. His books, it must be said, are not the sort one reads for pleasure. This one is no exception. Densely factual, prone to logic-chopping, and riddled with unlovely academic jargon, it is a plea, as Sunstein writes, "for a large role for technocrats in the process of reducing risks." He believes that the technocrats' main instrument must be cost-benefit analysis.

The early chapters of *Risk and Reason* are in large measure a critique of environmental policy-making during the 1970's, before the advent of cost-benefit analysis. The laws written in those years were repeatedly driven by public hysteria, especially discernible in the reaction to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), a book that persuaded millions of Americans they were being poisoned by pesticides. Eager to exploit these passions, politicians raced to get out front in the environmentalist parade.

A striking example of this phenomenon was the competitive bidding between Democratic Senator Edmund Muskie and President Richard Nixon, each of them determined to put his name on clean-air legislation. The result was a 1970 law more stringent than what either of them wanted, one that—explicitly and absurdly—barred the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from considering the costs of its clean-air regulations. Sunstein notes

Dan Seligman *is a contributing editor of* Forbes.

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that if the law had been enforced as written, the EPA would have had to shut down all automobile traffic in Los Angeles.

Sunstein also discusses the problems caused by the media's obsessive interest in finding an environmental disaster-of-the-month. Here a prime example is Love Canal, an abandoned waterway in upstate New York that, during the 1940's and 50's, was used by the Hooker Chemical Company to dump chemical wastes. Later, the canal was filled in, and hundreds of houses, plus a school, were built on the site. By the mid-1970's, residents of Love Canal began to fear that the chemicals were resurfacing and causing leukemia and other cancers, and the media obligingly described their plight in lurid detail. The New York State health commissioner declared a public emergency, and eventually President Carter declared Love Canal a national emergency, relocating hundreds of families. But, again, it was all hysteria. An exhaustive 1982 study by the EPA concluded that there was "no evidence of environmental contamination" at Love Canal.

Cost-benefit analysis in the federal regulatory arena owes its start mainly to the Reagan administration, but its use was expanded under the first President Bush and made a requirement under President Clinton. The courts have also weighed in, creating, as Sunstein shows, a number of regulatory "default principles" that give running room to federal agencies inclined to use cost-benefit analysis even when doing so is not required by legislation or presidential mandates. In deciding how to implement fuel-economy standards, for example, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration would now be expected to consider whether higher standards would lead manufacturers to build more small cars, which might increase accidental deaths on highways.

THE CASE for weighing costs against benefits seems, in principle, irresistible. It is hard to think of alternative models for regulatory policy-making or, for that matter, for any decision involving a degree of complexity. Cost-benefit analysis in some guise or other—including the plain old yellow pad with a line down the center separating pros and cons—comes naturally to most educated Americans. Yet, in the political arena, it remains stubbornly controversial, in part because millions of Americans simply want a "safe" environment, no questions asked, and fiercely resist any talk implying that there are various degrees of safety, with some of them too expensive to buy.

But cost-benefit analysis, like technocracy in general, has a larger problem. An agency embracing technocratic principles would presumably be writing rules that follow logically and ineluctably from the peer-reviewed data demanded by Sunstein, and would reject rule-making based on political intuition. The new decision-makers would presumably be "experts," not standard-issue political appointees.

Unfortunately or otherwise, this

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vision is a fantasy. It could not possibly work as advertised, for three intertwined reasons: (1) there remain massive uncertainties, acknowledged at length by Sunstein, about how costs and benefits should be weighed; (2) the uncertainties present boundless opportunities for regulators to rule in favor of the outcomes they deem socially and politically desirable; and (3) the regulators tend to be liberals, or—what is much the same thing—heavily biased in favor of increasing the budgets and expanding the authority of regulatory agencies. Sunstein looks closely at reason number 1 but essentially walks past numbers 2 and 3.

The massive uncertainties of cost-benefit analysis begin with assessing the economic value of the lives expected to be saved by a prospective regulation. Most of the studies on the subject are based on labor-market calculations. The core idea is that in order to attract people to high-risk jobs, you have to pay them more, and so we can infer from wage differentials just how much value people place on their lives. As Sunstein indicates in a fascinating table, estimates based on this method yield wildly divergent numbers, ranging from $700,000 to $16.3 million per life.

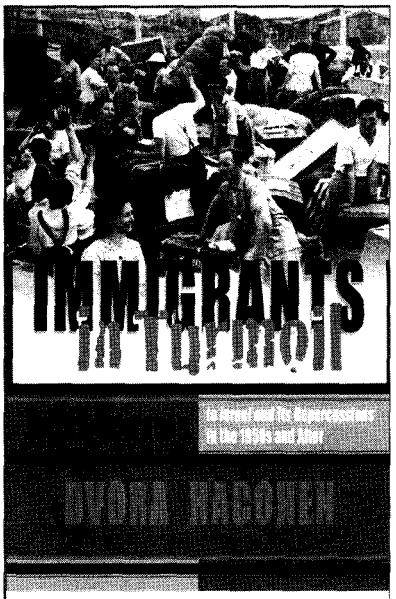
But that is just the beginning of the measurement problems. In a chapter on the regulation of arsenic in drinking water, Sunstein criticizes the EPA for using a life value of only $6.1 million. His objection is not that the figure is below the average in his table but rather that the agency failed to consider several other factors, particularly the higher value that he believes should be placed on lives when the risk involved is unavoidable. (We don't all have to go skiing, but we do have to drink water.) But how large an adjustment is needed for unavoidability? Reasonable people will disagree.

Still other adjustments might—or might not—be called for. Arsenic is a potential cause of cancer, and cancer deaths, which can be lingering and painful, are viewed by some as peculiarly awful. Without taking a stance on the matter, Sunstein cites a study suggesting that the value of avoiding an involuntary carcinogenic death is four times that of an instantaneous workplace death. Still another source of contention among the experts is the discount rate applicable to future deaths. The costs of regulation are incurred here and now, but the deaths being avoided by cleaner air or water would occur years later. Since a death in 30 years is not as bad as a death now, future mortality needs to be discounted. But by how much? The jury is still out.

It is hard to believe that what Sunstein calls the "cost-benefit state" would be any less politicized than the regulatory state to which we are accustomed. It would probably be more politicized. As we have learned from public-choice economics, government actors are no less self-interested than their private-sector counterparts, which would seem to imply that a technocratic regime, in which scientists and systems analysts were writing the rules, would be an engine of big government.

Indeed, there are passages in *Risk and Reason* that leave one thinking Sunstein himself wants a version of cost-benefit analysis that would demonstrate the need for a range of Great Society-style initiatives. As he argues at several points, we should be willing to bear higher costs when the groups being protected consist disproportionately of poor people and members of minority groups—not, one gathers, because their lives are more valuable in some strict calculus but because it is government's task to minimize the burdens of the disadvantaged.

Sunstein is almost certainly correct in arguing that cost-benefit thinking would eliminate some of the follies of the environmentalism of the 1970's. One might hope that we never again see another major statute that, like the Clean Air Act, forbids any consideration of cost. All the same, the sun will rise in the West before we see experts, wield-



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Dvora Hacohen

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ing cost-benefit analysis or any other technocratic tool, who do not harbor political imperatives of their own.

On the Inside

Bush at War
by Bob Woodward
Simon & Schuster: 400 pp. $28.00

Reviewed by
Frederick W. Kagan

THE TERRORIST attack of September 11, 2001 led to a myriad of changes large and small in our daily lives, to a wholesale reevaluation of our national security strategy, and to a war in Afghanistan and now, very likely, in Iraq and possibly elsewhere. It has also fueled a hunger for information about the key decisions guiding America's actions over the course of the past months, a hunger fed by the apparent secretiveness of the Bush administration concerning its deliberations.

FREDERICK W. KAGAN *is an associate professor of military history at West Point.*

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In *Bush at War*, Bob Woodward proposes to lift the curtain on those deliberations, at least for the first hundred days after September 11. An experienced journalist with the *Washington Post* and the author of numerous similar and highly successful books, Woodward offers extensive quotations from meetings of the National Security Council (NSC), off-the-record interviews with some of the key players, including the President, and extracts from classified and unclassified documents—all with the aim of giving us an insider's view of critical events.

This is not to say that an insider's view adds all that much to what informed observers of the administration were already concluding at the time. There was, for example, a widespread early impression that Secretary of State Colin L. Powell was isolated within the administration; that the administration had no clear idea of its goals in Afghanistan; and that, along with a feeling of tremendous urgency, there was a great deal of uncertainty about what exactly to do. *Bush at War* mainly confirms these impressions, adding more detail. On other questions, including the currently fashionable one of responsibility for 9/11 and the failures of the intelligence community, Woodward largely punts. What he provides, instead, is a concise and vivid image of an administration attempting with much zeal and no little confusion to wrestle with the greatest danger to face America in more than a decade.

Bush at War follows President Bush and his "war cabinet"—Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Powell, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet, and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice—from the moment they learned about the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to the collapse of the Taliban government in Afghanistan. A lengthy epilogue quickly sketches some of the major issues that arose subsequently, focusing on the debate about invading Iraq and the growing conflict between Powell and Cheney over that issue. The book, which proceeds in a simple chronological fashion, is written in an easy, journalistic style, and provides no references or citations of any kind.

The story opens with an exceptionally vivid description of each of the major players reacting to word of the terrorist attacks. Particularly poignant is the image of Powell racing back from a Latin America trip and unable, because of technical problems, to communicate with his deputy Rich Armitage or anyone else. A vignette of Tenet is even more telling: on learning of reports that additional unidentified aircraft were targeted at Washington, he at first ordered the entire CIA building evacuated; only the refusal of his director of counterterrorism to shut down that critical part of the agency brought Tenet to his senses, transforming him from "peace mode" to "war mode."

There follows a detailed narrative of the war cabinet in action. Woodward paints a picture of a President determined to respond dramatically, aggressively, effectively, and, above all, quickly. In tense cabinet and NSC meetings, Bush is seen continually pressing for rapid action while his team struggles to work out novel responses to completely unforeseen circumstances. Tensions between Tenet and Rumsfeld run high as first the CIA assumes a paramount role and then it becomes clear that Defense must begin to take the lead. Powell is consistently

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worried about the coalition that he is desperately trying to put together, and one already has the feeling that he is fighting an uphill battle against a President more than willing to go it alone.

Finally, the war itself begins, and the meetings focus on the minutiae of the campaign. The support of regional allies is both critical and frequently belated, holding up important aspects of America's deployment. It is clear from *Bush at War* as it was from speeches of the principals at the time that the collapse of the Taliban took the administration completely by surprise—without a detailed plan for the seizure of Kabul, the establishment of a new government, or the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Woodward graphically portrays Bush and his team scrambling to keep up with rapidly changing conditions half a world away.

And that—scrambling—is the dominant image with which one comes away from this book. *Bush at War* is most emphatically not a real history of America's response to 9/11, or of the war in Afghanistan, and Woodward does not really claim that it is. There is no significant exploration of the wealth of sources now available to evaluate how the battle was actually conducted and what its real results were. Nor does Woodward provide much commentary of his own, instead largely allowing the words of his protagonists and his own (unstated) principles of selection to speak for themselves. With his usual flair, he invites us to understand Bush, Powell, Rumsfeld, Tenet, and Rice, and to a lesser extent Cheney, as human beings, with all their feelings, skills, and foibles.

The picture of Bush is particularly engaging. Emotional, determined, impatient, curious, righteous, religious—the President emerges as one who sometimes tries to mask his personality behind his office but more often allows himself to appear as he is. The Bush who chokes back tears when speaking about the terrorist attacks, or holds tight to a retired firefighter as he stands on a smashed truck near the smoking ruins of the World Trade Center, is the real Bush, the same man who waxes impatient in cabinet meetings, who yells at the long-suffering Rice when things are not going well and who, somewhat to his credit, never really understands why he should force his principles to yield to practicalities.

But *Bush at War* is far from equal in its coverage of the major players. Woodward offers little insight into Cheney's attitudes and mindset: as has been noted by several reviewers, the Vice President's appearances in the book are mostly brief, dramatic, and unexplained. Powell and Tenet are painted sympathetically, and also seem more human and vulnerable than the untouchable Cheney or the determined and self-confident Rumsfeld. But Woodward does not attempt to portray Powell or Tenet as always right, nor are Rumsfeld and Cheney depicted as evil or excessively overbearing. Rather, the impression left by *Bush at War* is of a team of strong personalities who conflict but nevertheless work together. (This seductive impression may well be the most misleading one of all.)

The most glaring omission is of the uniformed military. We were, after all, in a war: soldiers, marines, sailors, and airmen were fighting, killing, and occasionally dying. Where is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)? Where is the theater commander? Where are the commanders of large units? Where are the soldiers? For Woodward, Generals Richard Myers, chairman

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of the JCS, and Tommy Franks, commander of CENTCOM, are only bit characters. We are given no real understanding of how they saw the world or felt about the war. It is not even clear how important their role was, so completely does Rumsfeld seem to be in charge of operations. Although Woodward spoke with several CIA operatives in the course of preparing his book, the Marines and soldiers who fought al Qaeda and the Taliban on the ground, to say nothing of the Air Force and Navy pilots who flew countless sorties over Afghanistan, might as well not have existed. Whatever the true role of the uniformed military in developing plans and conducting the war, Woodward made no effort to ascertain or to depict it.

Particularly unfortunate is Woodward's failure to offer an independent evaluation of the *outcome* of the campaign in Afghanistan. The unexpected and rapid collapse of the Taliban is allowed completely to overshadow the remaining question marks. Was bin Laden killed, or would he be captured? How badly was al Qaeda hurt? Would the new government of Hamid Karzai (about which Woodward does not speak at all) be able to establish its control in the country and maintain the order necessary to prevent terrorists from using it as a base in the future? What would become of Pakistan, whose president, Pervez Musharraf, had risked his regime to support the U.S. war? How would the left-over operations in Afghanistan affect the campaign against Iraq?

In truth, even as Woodward was completing his manuscript in October 2002, it was becoming increasingly clear that the war in Afghanistan was nowhere near so successful and decisive as the Bush administration claimed. But there is no discussion of this in *Bush at War*, and in that sense the book will be harmful to the process of learning the right lessons from the war and applying them to future crises.

NO LESS damaging in this connection is Woodward's silence on another, closely related matter: the thoroughgoing whitewash by the current Bush administration of the 1991 Gulf war. That the President himself should explicitly defend his father's decision not to remove Saddam Hussein in 1991 is understandable enough; that Woodward could find no one in the administration to question this assertion may also be understandable in its way, but is nevertheless very disturbing.

The results of leaving Saddam Hussein in power in 1991 included a decade of substantial and costly American military deployments in and around the Middle East, complete with constant skirmishes in the air over Iraq; Saddam Hussein's continued merciless repression of his own people; and the development of significant anti-American hostility throughout the region. It is said that one of the reasons bin Laden chose to attack the United States was the long-term stationing of American forces in Saudi Arabia—another consequence of the failures of 1991. It is certainly clear that our policy toward Israel and the Palestinians has been dramatically affected for the worse by our need to cultivate Arab allies against Saddam. Policymakers who cannot bring themselves to say even at this late date that the decision to leave Saddam in power in 1991 was wrong are not lightly to be trusted to make the right decisions in future crises.

In his epilogue, Woodward confesses to certain trepidations of his own. "It was not clear," he writes as of last October, "what might happen in the end with Iraq, whether Bush was headed for triumph or disaster or something in between." As of late December, that question remained unresolved—although, given America's overwhelming power, disaster would seem unlikely. The real question was, and is, how much muddling-through we will be permitted before our inability either to succeed fully or to think seriously about the long term catches up with us. Only the event can answer.

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"Now we can look forward to more obscene tax cuts for the rich, wholesale rape of the environment, huge deficits, obstruction of any investigation into corruption and a packed judiciary." Letter to the *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 7, 2002.

According to much postelection commentary a shift of two Senate seats has delivered full control of national policy to the Republicans. Soon oil companies will drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and conservative judges will assume seats on various federal courts, among other Democratic nightmares.

In fact, as any freshman who did not sleep through American Government 101 should know, nothing of the sort is likely to occur. Certainly, there will be some movement. The Homeland Security Bill, for example, has already become law, Democrats having realized that seeming to place the interests of public sector unions over national security was not a winning electoral strategy. In budgetary matters, the Republicans will do better on the margins and a compromise version of prescription drug coverage will pass.

But Republicans with loftier ambitions are likely to be disappointed, for **the switch in control does not greatly increase the likelihood that major Republican legislation will pass the Senate**. The implication of the filibuster is that on most matters (the budget is the exception that seems to have misled so many) sixty Senators must be willing to take up legislation or nominations. Nothing that forty-one or more Democrats strongly oppose will pass. The switch in control has not magically produced sixty votes for a Republican version of a prescription drug bill or a producer-friendly energy policy. Two months ago Tom Daschle could not pass anything that forty-one Republicans were willing to filibuster, and two months from now the same will be true for Trent Lott and forty-one recalcitrant Democrats.

In sum, for those who like policy gridlock, little has changed. **What the switch in control will change is the "show time" aspects of the Senate process.** We will see more of Trent Lott and less of Tom Daschle on TV. There will be more publicity for bills favored by the Republicans, different hearings with different witnesses, and more votes intended to embarrass Democrats. That's the way the game is played.

There is, however, a danger as well as a benefit to the Republicans in their new status as the party in control of the national government. With control comes responsibility for national policies and national conditions. One reason that congressional Democrats fared so badly in the 1994 elections was that Democrats controlled everything and thus took full blame. After Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole assumed leadership of their respective chambers, however, President Clinton was able to shift blame to the Republicans and "triangulate" to reelection, an option now unavailable to President Bush. Republicans now bear full responsibility for the state of the nation during the coming two years, but they have less power than most people realize.

— David Brady and Morris Fiorina

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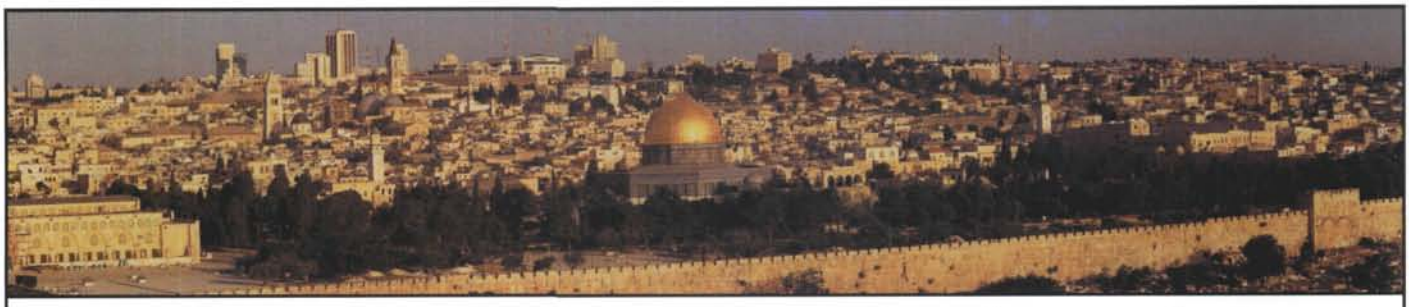

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